

**Sinnhaftigkeit und Bedeutsamkeit**  
**Wesen und Determinanten eudaimonischen Unterhaltungserlebens**

Abhandlung (kumulative Dissertation)  
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Matthias Hofer

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Prof. Dr. Werner Wirth  
Prof. Dr. Andreas Fahr  
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### Zusammenfassung

Der vorliegende Beitrag<sup>1</sup> bildet die Synopse zu vier Forschungsarbeiten, die im Zeitraum 2009 bis 2013 erstellt wurden. Ausgangspunkt der vorliegenden kumulativen Dissertation war, eine Erklärung dafür zu finden, warum Rezipienten bei der Rezeption eines traurigen und belastenden fiktionalen Medieninhalts, der zudem noch negativ endet, trotz der erlebten Traurigkeit<sup>2</sup> ein positives Rezeptionserleben haben können. Die vorliegende Dissertation reiht sich somit in Forschungen zum sog. *Sad Film Paradoxon* ein (Ahn, Jin, & Ritterfeld, 2012; Bartsch, Vorderer, Mangold, & Viehoff, 2008; Dohle, 2011; Goldenberg, Pyszczyński, Johnson, Greenberg, & Solomon, 1999; Knobloch-Westerwick, Gong, Hagner, & Kerbeykian, 2012; Mills, 1993; Oliver, 1993; Oliver, Weaver, & Sargent, 2000; Schramm & Wirth, 2010; Vogel, 2007). Die Forschung zum Sad Film Paradoxon fokussiert – bis auf wenige Studien (Ahn et al., 2012; Goldenberg et al., 1999; Knobloch-Westerwick et al., 2012; Mills, 1993; Schramm & Wirth, 2010) – auf Zusammenhangsfragestellungen nach der *Selektion* trauriger Medieninhalte (Dohle, 2011; Oliver, 1993; Vogel, 2007) (motivationale Komponente). Die Informationsverarbeitungs-, bzw. Rezeptionsprozesse, und damit *Mediatorprozesse*, die zwischen der erlebten Traurigkeit und Unterhaltungserleben liegen und letztlich deren paradoxes Zusammengehen klären könnten, werden im Rahmen von Forschungen zu Zuwendungsmotiven allerdings nicht erklärt (vgl. auch Dohle, 2011). Es ist daher forschungslogisch von eminenter Wichtigkeit, auch die Prozessebene theoretisch zu modellieren und diese Modellierung dann vor allem auch empirisch zu testen; denn Selektionsentscheidungen liegen (fast) immer auch Rezeptionserlebnisse und damit Prozesse zugrunde (Slater, 2007). Mit der *Affective-Disposition-Theory* (Zillmann & Cantor, 1977) und der *Excitation-Transfer-Theory* (Bryant & Miron, 2003) liegen zwar zwei prominente prozessorientierte Theorien vor. Beide Ansätze müssen jedoch erhebliche Einschränkungen beim Stimulus in Kauf nehmen, denn weder die Affective-Disposition-Theory noch die Excitation Transfer Theory können Unterhaltungserleben bei einem negativen Ende erklären. Mit der *Theorie sozialer Vergleiche* (Festinger, 1954; Mares & Cantor, 1992) und dem *Attitude Interpretation Ansatz* (Mills, 1993) liegen zwei Konzeptionen vor, die dieser Einschränkung auf Seiten des Stimulus‘ nicht unterliegen. Sie gehen zwar zumindest implizit von zwischen Traurigkeit und Unterhaltungserleben liegenden *Mediatorprozessen* aus,

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<sup>1</sup> Der Beitrag bildet die *Synopse*, die für eine kumulative Dissertation gemäss § 7 der Promotionsverordnung der Philosophischen Fakultät der Universität Zürich gemeinsam mit der Sammlung veröffentlichter Publikationen einzureichen ist.

<sup>2</sup> „Zwischen den Begriffen *Trauer* und *Traurigkeit* besteht ein Unterschied. Während Trauer als emotionale Reaktion auf einen persönlichen und unwiderruflichen Verlust auftritt, versteht man unter Traurigkeit einerseits die *Stimmung* einer Person, andererseits aber auch eine Emotion auf ein unerwünschtes Ereignis, das aber nicht zwangsläufig mit einem dauerhaften Verlust einhergehen muss (Barr-Zisowitz, 2000; Dohle 2011). Im Hinblick auf den Gegenstand ‘trauriger Film‘ wird in der vorliegenden Studie immer von Traurigkeit (verstanden als Emotion) gesprochen [...]“ Hofer (2011, S. 324).

können aber dieses paradoxe Verhältnis auf konzeptioneller und vor allem auf empirischer Ebene nicht befriedigend klären.

Die erste Studie (Studie I) nimmt sich dieser Frage an und rekurriert dabei auf eine appraisaltheoretische Modellierung der sog. *Valenztransformation*, also der Umwandlung negativ valenzierter Traurigkeit in positiv valenziertes Rezeptionserleben (Wirth & Schramm, 2007a). Vor dem Hintergrund des sog. *Emotions-Metaemotions-Regulationsmodells* (EMR, Wirth & Schramm, 2007a; 2007b) wird argumentiert, dass die erlebte Traurigkeit bei der Rezeption im Zuge sog. *Metaappraisals* in Unterhaltungserleben umgewandelt werden kann. Diese Metaappraisals werden bei Wirth und Schramm (2007a; 2007b) letztlich als vermittelnde Prozesse, als Mediatoren zwischen der Traurigkeit und dem Unterhaltungserleben konzipiert. In einer experimentellen Untersuchung wurde das Ende eines Films (*Dancer in the Dark*, USA, 2000, Regie: Lars von Trier) so manipuliert, dass die Geschichte einmal ein positives und einmal ein negatives Ende hatte. Es zeigte sich, dass besagte Mediatorprozesse nur bei einem negativen Ende am Werk waren, d.h. nur bei negativem Ende zeigten sich signifikante indirekte Effekte der Traurigkeit auf Unterhaltungserleben über die besagten Metaappraisalprozesse, bei positivem Ende nicht. Dabei erwies sich die Bewertung der eigenen Traurigkeit aufgrund interner und externer Normen und Werte als wichtigster Mediator. Die erste der vier dissertationsrelevanten Studien lieferte damit erstmals eine auf empirischer Evidenz basierende Erklärung dafür, wie die Rezeption eines tragischen Medieninhalts trotz erlebter Traurigkeit zu einem positiven Rezeptionserleben führen kann: Ein positives Rezeptionserleben (i.e., Unterhaltung) scheint sich nicht nur durch Genuss, Freude und Entspannung zu konstituieren, sondern auch durch Gedanken über Werte, Normen, den Sinn der eigenen Existenz oder des Lebens an sich.

Entsprechend setzt die zweite dissertationsrelevante Studie (Studie II) direkt an der abhängigen Variable Unterhaltungserleben an. Dabei wird eine alternative Unterhaltungskonzeption – Appreciation (Oliver & Bartsch, 2010) – berücksichtigt, die auf aristotelischen Ideen basiert. Demnach zieht die Rezeption eines tragischen Medieninhalts nicht kurzfristigen Genuss, Entspannung und Freude nach sich, sondern lässt den/die Rezipient/in durch Gedanken über das Leben und über Werte und Normen Sinnhaftigkeit und Bedeutsamkeit (engl. *meaningfulness*) erleben. Eine bisher unbeantwortete Frage war, welche Faktoren ein solches Rezeptionserleben begünstigen. Ein in diesem Kontext besonders fruchtbarer Ansatz findet sich in der *Terror-Management-Theory* (TMT, Greenberg, Solomon, & Pyszczynski, 1997). Diese besagt im Kern, dass die Salienz der eigenen Sterblichkeit zu einer intensiven Suche nach Bedeutsamkeit führt. Es wird vor dem

Hintergrund der TMT argumentiert, dass diese Bedeutsamkeit auch im Zuge der Rezeption eines tragischen Medieninhalts, der sich allerdings nicht nur durch seine Tragik, sondern vielmehr dadurch auszeichnet, dass Charaktere dargestellt werden, die hohem Masse nach moralischen Normen und Werten handeln und dem/der RezipientIn aufzeigen können, wie ein sinnhaftes und bedeutsames Leben aussehen kann, gefunden werden kann. Moralische Kriterien, nach denen in Studie I die eigene Traurigkeit bewertet wurde, sind demnach auch auf Seiten der abhängigen Variable von Bedeutung. Wie sich zeigte, konnte die Hypothese, wonach die Salienz der eigenen Sterblichkeit zu einem höheren Ausmass an Appreciation bei der Rezeption eines tragischen Medieninhalts führt, bestätigt werden, allerdings nur bei den Probanden, die allgemein in ihrem Leben nach einem tieferen Sinn suchen. Mit anderen Worten: der Einfluss der Mortalitätssalienz auf Appreciation wurde moderiert durch die generelle Suche nach einem Sinn im Leben (engl. search for meaning in life, Steger, Kashdan, Sullivan, & Lorentz, 2008). Bezüglich hedonistischen Unterhaltungserlebens hatten die unabhängige Variable (Mortalitätssalienz vs. Kontrollgruppe) und der Moderator Suche nach einem Sinn im Leben eine gegenteilige Wirkung: ProbandInnen, die in hohem Masse nach einem Sinn in ihrem Leben suchen, erlebten mehr hedonistisches Unterhaltungserleben, wenn ihre Mortalität vor der Rezeption *nicht* salient gemacht wurden. Damit zeigt die Studie nicht nur Moderatoren von Appreciation auf, sondern liefert auch einen empirischen auf Experimentaldaten basierenden Beleg dafür, dass es sich bei Appreciation und hedonistischem Unterhaltungserleben um unterschiedliche Konstrukte handelt, und damit letztlich einen Nachweis diskriminanter Validität des Appreciationkonstrukts.

Die dritte Studie (Studie III) setzt ebenfalls bei der abhängigen Variable an. Konkret wurde das Ziel verfolgt, konzeptuelle Unschärfen des Appreciationbegriffs inhaltlich zu konkretisieren. Basierend auf Forschungen zu psychologischem oder eudaimonischem Wohlbefinden (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff & Keyes, 1995) wurde ein theoretisches Modell des sog. *eudaimonischen Unterhaltungserlebens*<sup>3</sup> entwickelt – ein mehrdimensionales Konstrukt, bestehend aus den Dimensionen *Verbundenheit*, *Aktivierung zentraler Werte*, *Kompetenz/persönliches Wachstum*, *Sinn im Leben/Selbst-Akzeptanz* und *Autonomie*. In zwei Studien (Studie III.1 und Studie III.2) konnte die Struktur eudaimonischen Unterhaltungserlebens faktoranalytisch validiert werden. Die erste der beiden Studien (Studie

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<sup>3</sup> Es sei an dieser Stelle bereits erwähnt, dass der Begriff *Unterhaltungserleben* im Zusammenhang mit eudaimonischen Gratifikationen u.U. auf den ersten Blick verfehlt scheinen mag. Dennoch soll im Rahmen der vorliegenden Dissertation an diesem Begriff festgehalten werden – dies aus folgendem Grund: Es ist das Hauptziel der vorliegenden Dissertation, den Unterhaltungsbegriff zu erweitern. Die zu diesem Zweck durchgeführten Studien reihen sich zudem in eine Forschungstradition ein, die Unterhaltungserleben als ihr zentrales Forschungsobjekt betrachtet. Denkbar wären sicherlich auch Begriffe wie *positive Gratifikation* oder *positives Rezeptionserleben*. Allerdings wären diese Begriffe aus Sicht des Autors zu breit, bzw. zu unschaft, denn unter den Begriff „positives Rezeptionserleben“ liessen sich beispielsweise auch das Konzept *Flow* subsumieren.

III.1) lieferte sowohl konvergente als auch diskriminante Validität für das Konstrukt eudaimonischen Unterhaltungserlebens. Diskriminante Validität konnte dadurch nachgewiesen werden, dass sich auf keiner der fünf Dimensionen eudaimonischen Unterhaltungserlebens Unterschiede bezüglich des Endes (glücklich vs. tragisch) des Stimulusfilms (*Hotel Rwanda*, USA, 2004, Terry George) zeigten; bei hedonistischem Unterhaltungserleben fanden sich solche Unterschiede. Konvergente Validität konnte durch eine positive Korrelation zwischen erlebter Traurigkeit und den Dimensionen eudaimonischen Unterhaltungserlebens demonstriert werden. In der zweiten Studie (Studie III.2) konnte die Struktur eudaimonischen Unterhaltungserlebens erneut durch eine konfirmatorische Faktoranalyse validiert werden. Eine offene Frage von Studie III war, welche Moderatoren eudaimonisches Unterhaltungserleben beeinflussen können. Offenbar sind diese nicht bei Stimulusmerkmalen – zumindest nicht beim Moderator *Filmende* – zu suchen.

Studie IV geht daher noch einen Schritt weiter, indem sie bei *Rezipientenmerkmalen* ansetzt und das *Alter* als Moderator eudaimonischen Unterhaltungserlebens untersucht. Vor dem Hintergrund entwicklungspsychologischer Theorien (Arnett, 2000; 2007; Carstensen, Fung, & Charles, 2003) wird argumentiert, dass ältere Menschen entsprechend ihrem Streben nach Sinnhaftigkeit und Bedeutsamkeit auch ein höheres Ausmass an eudaimonischer Unterhaltung erleben als jüngere Menschen. Die Studie stützt sich dabei auf Untersuchungen zum Selektionsverhalten unterschiedlicher Altersgruppen (Bartsch, 2012a; Mares, Oliver, & Cantor, 2008), wonach sich die Motivlagen älterer Menschen hin zu emotional bedeutungsvollen Situationen und sozialen Begegnungen bewegt, was sich letztlich auch Medieninhaltspräferenzen niederschlägt. Studie IV erweitert die Ergebnisse dieser Selektionsstudien, indem der Rezeptionsprozess, bzw. eudaimonisches Unterhaltungserleben als abhängige Variable untersucht wird. Es zeigte sich in der Tat, dass ältere ProbandInnen bei der Rezeption des Films *Dancer in the Dark* (USA, 2000, Regie: Lars von Trier) auf allen Dimensionen in höherem Masse eudaimonisch unterhalten waren als jüngere.

Anschliessend an eine kurze Zusammenfassung der jeweiligen Studien (Studie I-IV) und deren Einordnung in den jeweiligen Forschungszusammenhang werden Implikationen und Forschungslücken der jeweiligen Studien, die jeweils mit der nächsten Studie gefüllt werden können, diskutiert. Am Ende der Synopse folgt eine Diskussion genereller Implikationen der vorliegenden Dissertation. Eine tabellarische Zusammenstellung der vier dissertationsrelevanten Studien findet sich in Tabelle 1.

Tabelle 1. Zusammenstellung der vier dissertationsrelevanten Studien

	Studie I		Studie II		Studie III		Studie IV
<b>Kernaussage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Auflösung des Sad Film Paradoxons:</li> <li>- Meta-Appraisals als Mediatoren zwischen Traurigkeit und Unterhaltungserleben</li> <li>- Normen und Werte als wichtigster Mediator</li> </ul>	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mortalitätssalienz und Suche nach Sinn im Leben als Moderatoren von Appreciation</li> <li>- Unterschiedliche Wirkungen der Moderatoren auf hedonistisches Unterhaltungserleben und Appreciation</li> </ul>	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inhaltliche Konkretisierung Appreciation</li> <li>- Eudaimonisches Unterhaltungserleben als fünf-dimensionales</li> <li>- Konvergente und diskriminante Validität des Konstrukts</li> </ul>	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Alter als Moderator eudaimonischen Unterhaltungserlebens</li> </ul>
<b>Implikationen</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unterhaltungserleben durch Gedanken über Werte, Normen, den Sinn der eigenen Existenz oder des Lebens an sich → Alternative Konzeption von Unterhaltungserleben: Appreciation</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sinnhaftigkeit und Bedeutsamkeit als Kern von Appreciation</li> </ul>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Eudaimonisches Unterhaltungserleben als Emotionsregulation</li> <li>- Eudaimonisches Unterhaltungserleben und individuelle Identität</li> <li>- Eudaimonisches Unterhaltungserleben und Gruppenidentität</li> </ul>
<b>Forschungslücke(n)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Moderatoren von Appreciation</li> <li>- Unterschiede hedonistisches Unterhaltungserleben und Appreciation</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Konzeptuelle Unschärfen von Appreciation</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Moderatoren eudaimonischen Unterhaltungserlebens</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Weiterer möglicher Moderator: → Fiktionalität vs. Faktualität</li> </ul>

### Das Sad Film Paradoxon

Vergnügen, Entspannung und Genuss während oder nach der Rezeption eines Medieninhalts, der vorwiegend negative Emotionen auslöst, stellt die medienpsychologisch orientierte Unterhaltungsforschung vor eine paradoxe Situation, die mit dem Begriff *Sad Film Paradoxon* bezeichnet wird (Dohle, 2011; Oliver, 1993; Vogel, 2007; Vogel & Gleich, 2008). Konkret geht es dabei um die Frage, weshalb sich Menschen bei der Rezeption eines traurigen und belastenden, eines tragischen Medieninhalts, der vorwiegend negative Emotionen auslöst, dennoch Unterhalten fühlen (*Prozesskomponente*), bzw. solche Medieninhalte (erneut) selektieren (*motivationale Komponente*). Es sollte eine Erklärung für die Prozesskomponenten des Sad Film Paradoxons gefunden werden.

Bevor genauer auf das Paradoxon und mögliche Lösungsansätze eingegangen wird, scheint es ratsam, erstens eine Definition eines tragischen Films zu geben und zweitens Unterhaltungserleben zu definieren. Beide Definitionen sollen allerdings nur vorläufig Gültigkeit besitzen, denn ein wesentlicher Bestandteil der hier synoptisch zusammengefassten Dissertation ist eine Erweiterung des Unterhaltungsbegriffs, womit auch eine Erweiterung des Begriffs tragischer Medieninhalt einhergeht.

#### Tragische Medieninhalte

Die folgende Zusammenstellung von Definitionen tragischer Medieninhalte orientiert sich an Dohle (2011), Hofer (2011) und Asshauer (2005). Als tragische Medieninhalte (oder Tragödien<sup>4</sup>) werden durchwegs solche Medieninhalte bezeichnet, die ein negatives Ende haben und die bei RezipientInnen Traurigkeit auslösen. So definiert Mills (1993) folgendermassen: „A tragedy has a dreadful, disastrous, deplorable conclusion that causes viewers to feel mournful and melancholy” (S. 255). Auch Feagin (1983) betrachtet das negative Ende als entscheidendes Wesensmerkmal von Tragödien: “[...] tragedies [are] [...] to put it bluntly, the class of works of art with unhappy endings [...]“ (255). Oliver (1993) geht bei ihrer Definition vor allem auf die Wirkung des Medieninhalts ein, nimmt also eine (medien-)psychologische Perspektive ein: “[...] entertainment that is designed to evoke negative or even noxious emotions or responses [...]“ (S. 315). Oliver, Sergeant und Weaver (2000) berücksichtigen sowohl Werk, als auch Wirkung: “Specifically, we understand tragedy or sad films to feature prominently the suffering of agreeable or liked characters. Furthermore, these portrayals are likely designed to evoke (and are likely successful in evoking) sad emotional responses on the part of the viewer” (S. 284).

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<sup>4</sup> Das Wort Tragödie stammt aus dem Griechischen und heisst wörtlich übersetzt *Bocksgesänge* (τραγοι (tragoi) = die Böcke; ὠδή (ode) = der Gesang). Tragödien wurden im Rahmen von Feierlichkeiten zu Ehren des Gottes Dionysos abgehalten. Dabei wurde ein einzelner (später auch mehrere) Protagonisten jeweils von einem Chor begleitet, dessen Mitglieder als Böcke verkleidet waren (vgl. Asshauer, 2005).

Nach Vogel (2007) behandeln tragische Medieninhalte u.a. folgende Themen (vgl. Vogel, 2007, S. 40-41):

- Eine einzigartige, grosse und zunächst sehr erfüllte Liebe, die dann durch widrige Umstände zerstört wird.
- Eine Freundschaft oder besondere Bindung zwischen zwei Hauptakteuren, die durch Loyalität, tiefgreifendes Vertrauen und bedingungsloses Füreinander-Einstehen in schwierigen Zeiten gekennzeichnet ist. Meist kommt ein Protagonist im Laufe der Handlung ums Leben.
- Eine psychische oder physische Erkrankung des Hauptakteurs, der sein Leben mit dieser Einschränkung meistern muss.
- Das Schicksal und die Lebens- bzw. Leidensgeschichte einer oder auch mehrerer meist weiblicher Hauptpersonen.
- Die Ungerechtigkeit und die Unerbittlichkeit und die zerstörerische Wirkung menschlichen Handelns, worunter andere Menschen zu leiden haben.

Die umfassendste Definition, die sowohl konkrete Medieninhaltsangaben aber auch Angaben zu Rezipientenreaktionen enthält, findet sich schliesslich bei Zillmann (1998):

*„Unrequited love, abandonment by intimates, suffering from incurable diseases, death after prolonged agony, unbearable emotional torment ending in suicide, or the sacrifice of body and soul in the pursuit of noble causes, mostly the greater common good – that is the stuff that tragedies are made of. [...] It thrives, more or less by definition, on the display of grave misfortunes that befall good, admired, and beloved protagonists who are considered utterly undeserving of their deplored fate. [...] Under the indicated circumstances, tragic drama must be expected to engage the empathic sensitivities of witnesses and evoke feelings of commiseration and pity“ (S. 4).*

Tragische Medieninhalte lösen also vor allem negative Empfindungen bei RezipientInnen aus: dazu gehören Traurigkeit, Erschütterung, aber mitunter auch ein Gefühl der (negativen) Ergriffenheit und des empathischen Mitfühlens der negativen Emotionen eines/r Protagonisten/in (Hofer, 2011). Gleichzeitig finden sich aber in der Forschung deutliche Hinweise, dass RezipientInnen die Rezeption eines tragischen Medieninhalts trotz der empfundenen Traurigkeit positiv erleben (Schramm & Wirth, 2010; Oliver, 1993). Dieses positive Rezeptionserleben wird meist mit dem Begriff des *Unterhaltungserlebens* beschrieben (z.B., Vorderer, Klimmt, & Ritterfeld, 2004).



**Unterhaltungserleben.** Unterhaltung<sup>5</sup> wird als positives Rezeptionserleben betrachtet (Nabi & Krcmar, 2004; Vorderer et al., 2004). Vorderer et al., (2004) konzipieren Unterhaltungserleben im Kern als Genuss (engl. enjoyment). Bosshard und Macconi (1998) nennen Entspannung, Abwechslung, Spass und Freude als Definitionskriterien für Unterhaltungserleben. Konkret definieren die beiden Autoren Unterhaltungserleben folgendermassen:

*„Psychological relaxation - it is restful, refreshing, light, distracting; change and diversion - it offers variety and diversity; stimulation - it is dynamic, interesting, exciting, thrilling; fun - it is merry, amusing, funny; atmosphere - it is beautiful, good, pleasant, comfortable; joy - it is happy, cheerful“* (S. 4).

Damit sollte deutlich geworden sein, dass das gleichzeitige Auftreten von Traurigkeit und Unterhaltungserleben bei der Rezeption eines tragischen Medieninhalts zu einer paradoxen Situation führen.

### **Theoretische und empirische Ansätze zur Lösung des Sad Film Paradoxons**

Die meisten Forschungen zum Paradoxon des Genusses trauriger Filme befassen sich mit der Frage nach der *Selektion* trauriger Medieninhalte (motivationale Komponente, Dohle, 2011; Vogel, 2007). Aus einer motivationalen Sichtweise heraus wird hierbei auf distale Erklärungskonzepte rekuriert – vor allem auf Persönlichkeitsmerkmale, wie zum Beispiel Sensation Seeking (Zuckerman, 2006), Empathiefähigkeit, das Geschlecht (Oliver et al., 2000) oder Need for Affect (Bartsch, Appel, & Storch, 2010; Vogel, 2007), als erklärende Variablen für die *Zuwendung* zu traurigen oder allgemein belastenden Medieninhalten. Dabei wird in der Weise argumentiert, dass Persönlichkeitseigenschaften zu einem gewichtigen Teil (mit-)bestimmen, wie Menschen ihre Umwelt zu gestalten versuchen; damit beeinflussen Persönlichkeitsmerkmale auch das individuelle Mediennutzungsverhalten oder zumindest Präferenzen für die einen oder anderen Medieninhalte (Hall, 2005; Vogel, 2007). Oliver (1993), beispielsweise, zeigte, dass es Personen mit einer hohen *Empathiefähigkeit* sind, die traurigen Filmen etwas Positives abgewinnen können und sich diesen deshalb zuwenden.

Die Relevanz oben genannter Forschungen zu Prädiktoren von Selektionsentscheidungen für tragische Medieninhalte ist für die Mediennutzungsforschung unbestritten. Jedoch liegt einer Selektion als endogene Variable nicht nur eine gewisse Persönlichkeitsstruktur oder gewisse Präferenzen, sondern meist auch ein (oder mehrere) vorhergehende/s Rezeptionserlebnis(se) zugrunde, das/die dem/der RezipientIn eine

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<sup>5</sup> Für einen Überblick über verschiedene nicht nur rezeptionsorientierte Theorien der Unterhaltung vgl. Wunsch (2006). Im Rahmen der vorliegenden Dissertation wird Unterhaltungserleben aus einer rezeptionstheoretischen und prozessorientierten Perspektive betrachtet.

Entscheidungsgrundlage für weitere Rezeptionen liefert/n (Slater, 2007). Dem widersprechen nicht einmal behavioristisch orientierte Theorieansätze: bei Zillmanns Mood Management Ansatz (1988) führt eine wiederholte Selektion (und anschließende Rezeption) bestimmter Medieninhalte zu sog. *Memory Traces*, die eine erneute Rezeption ebendieser oder ähnlicher Medieninhalte begünstigen, bzw. wahrscheinlicher machen. Mit anderen Worten liegen Selektionsentscheidungen nicht nur distale Prädiktoren, sondern immer auch proximale Rezeptionsprozesse zugrunde.

Ein zweiter Forschungsstrang beschreibt daher den Genuss trauriger Filme auf Prozessebene. Die beiden prominentesten Ansätze sind die *Affective-Disposition-Theory* (Zillmann, 1991a) und die *Excitation-Transfer-Theory* (Bryant & Miron, 2003; Zillmann, 1994; Zillmann, 1991b). Allerdings müssen beide Ansätze Einschränkungen beim Medienstimulus hinnehmen. Konkret wird im Rahmen dieser Ansätze stets von einem Happy End ausgegangen und damit können die beiden Ansätze Unterhaltungserleben bei einem nicht zu unterschätzenden Teil der Unterhaltungsangebote nicht oder nur schwerlich erklären (Raney, 2004; Zillmann, 1991a, 2006). Das Ende eines Films lässt sich letztlich als *Moderator* mit zwei Ausprägungen betrachten. Sowohl die *Affective-Disposition-Theory* als auch die *Excitation-Transfer-Theory* können somit Unterhaltungserleben nur bei einer Ausprägung des Moderators erklären.

Schliesslich liegen mit der *Theorie sozialer Vergleiche* (Festinger, 1954; Mares & Cantor, 1992) und der dem *Attitude Interpretation Ansatz* (Mills, 1993) zwei Konzeptionen vor, die dieser Einschränkung auf Seiten des Stimulus‘ nicht unterliegen. Sie gehen zwar zumindest implizit von zwischen Traurigkeit und Unterhaltungserleben liegenden *Mediatorprozessen* aus, können aber dieses paradoxe Verhältnis auf konzeptioneller und vor allem auf empirischer Ebene nicht befriedigend klären.

**Affective Disposition Theory.** Die *Affective-Disposition-Theory* steht in engem Zusammenhang mit Zillmanns Arbeiten zu empathischem Erleben bei der Medienrezeption (Zillmann & Cantor, 1977). Die Theorie geht davon aus, dass ein Filmcharakter vom/von der jeweiligen Rezipientin/en während der Rezeption moralisch bewertet wird. In einem ersten Schritt wird dessen Verhalten wahrgenommen. Dieses wird in einem zweiten Schritt moralisch bewertet. Fällt die Bewertung positiv aus, wird einem der Charakter sympathisch und man beginnt für einen positiven Ausgang der Geschichte für den Filmcharakter zu hoffen, bzw. einen negativen Ausgang zu fürchten<sup>6</sup>. Falls die Bewertung negativ ausfällt, wünscht man dem Charakter nichts Gutes – Zillmann (1991a) spricht hier von *Counterempathy* – und

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<sup>6</sup> Im Rahmen dieser Theorie lässt sich daher auch der Spannungsbegriff gut erklären: ein Oszillieren zwischen Hoffnung und Furcht (Zillmann, 1996).

ist erleichtert, wenn ihm Schlechtes zustösst. Damit werden in der Affective-Disposition-Theory nicht nur das Rezeptionserleben sondern auch narrative Strukturen betrachtet. Das Ende eines Plots nimmt damit eine zentrale Bedeutung ein.

**Excitation-Transfer-Theory.** Die Excitation-Transfer-Theory basiert auf der *Three-Factor Theory of Emotion* (Zillmann, 1991b; Bryant & Miron, 2003), die wiederum auf der *Two-Factor Theory of Emotion* von Schachter und Singer (1962) basiert. Auch hier entscheidet letztlich das Ende eines Plots darüber, ob Unterhaltungserleben entsteht oder nicht. Da physiologische Erregung unspezifisch ist und sich nur langsam abbaut, Kognitionen, bzw. Attribuierungen sich aber rasch ändern können, ist es möglich, dass die gleiche Erregung einmal für ein negatives und zu einem späteren Zeitpunkt für ein positives Erleben verantwortlich gemacht werden kann (Schachter & Singer, 1962). Das kann erklären, warum ein äusserst spannender oder belastender Medieninhalt bei einem glücklichen, bzw. erwünschten Ausgang der Geschichte zu euphorischen Gefühlen und damit zu Unterhaltungserleben führen kann.

**Soziale Vergleiche.** Ein vielversprechender, allerdings in der Unterhaltungsforschung wenig beforschter Ansatz, der Unterhaltungserleben bei tragischen Medien erklären kann, ohne der Einschränkung eines Happy Ends zu unterliegen, ist die *Theorie Sozialer Vergleiche* (Festinger, 1954). Mares und Cantor (1992) fanden in einer Experimentalstudie, dass ältere einsame Menschen im Sinne eines Abwärtsvergleichs ein höheres Ausmass an positiven Emotionen erlebten als gut integrierte und glückliche Menschen, wenn sie einen Medieninhalt rezipierten, der einsame ältere Menschen zeigte, denen es noch schlechter ging. Der soziale Abwärtsvergleich hilft dabei den RezipientInnen, ihr Selbstbild zu stabilisieren, „indem zum Beispiel Unzulänglichkeiten der eigenen Person oder der eigenen Lebenssituation relativiert werden“ (Dohle, 2011, S. 109). Allerdings muss hier angemerkt werden, dass im Falle von gut integrierten RezipientInnen, die einsame ältere Menschen gesehen haben, ein negatives Rezeptionserleben beobachtet wurde. Also hängt der in der Theorie implizierte Mediatorprozess im Wesentlichen von Rezipientenmerkmalen ab. Damit kann aber die Theorie sozialer Vergleiche Unterhaltungserleben bei tragischen Medieninhalten nicht in jedem Fall erklären, sondern muss „Einschränkungen“ auf Rezipientenseite hinnehmen.

**Attitude Interpretation.** Schliesslich legte Mills (1993) mit dem *Attitude Interpretation Ansatz* ein plausible Erklärung für den Genuss tragischer Medieninhalte vor. Der Autor argumentiert dabei für die Existenz einer Einstellung, „that it is good to feel bad when another person is suffering – that it is good to empathize with suffering“ (Mills, 1993, S. 257). In zwei Experimentalstudien konnte Mills (1993) zeigen, dass Probanden, die eine

tragische Version eines Films sahen und angaben, das empathische Mitleiden mit dem jeweiligen Protagonisten positiv zu bewerten, das grösste Ausmass an Unterhaltung erlebten. Die Studie gibt bereits einen wichtigen Hinweis auf die im folgenden beschriebenen Konzepte der *Metaappraisals* und *Metaemotionen*, bleibt aber im Grunde in einer persönlichkeitsmerkmals- oder dispositionsbasierten Erklärung verhaften, denn letztlich können Einstellungen als relativ überdauernde Konstrukte betrachtet werden (Ajzen, 2001). Auch auf methodischer Ebene ist dieser Einwand gerechtfertigt: die positive Einstellung wurde mit zwei Items gemessen, die eine grosse Ähnlichkeit mit dem Konzept der Empathiefähigkeit (z.B., Hofer, 2011) aufweisen (s. auch Dohle, 2011).

**Zwischenfazit.** Insgesamt lässt sich festhalten, dass sowohl die Affective-Disposition-Theory als auch die Excitation-Transfer-Theory nicht umfassend genug sind, um eine Erklärung für Unterhaltungserleben bei einem tragischen Film zu liefern, denn sie beschreiben ein positives Erleben lediglich in Bezug auf Medieninhalte, die zwar negative Momente enthalten können, die aber positiv enden. Bei einem negativen Ende „versagen“ die beiden Ansätze bei der Erklärung von Unterhaltungserleben trotz Traurigkeit. Nun hat sich aber in den oben genannten Definitionen gezeigt, dass genau dieses negative Ende entscheidendes Wesensmerkmal tragischer Medieninhalte ist. Die Theorie Sozialer Vergleiche geht einen Schritt weiter und vermag offenbar auch Unterhaltungserleben bei durchwegs tragischen Medieninhalten (mit negativem Ende) zu erklären. Allerdings löst die Studie von Mares und Cantor (1992) die paradoxe Situation des gleichzeitigen Auftretens negativer Emotionen und positiven Unterhaltungserlebens letztlich nicht auf. Vielmehr wurde bei Mares und Cantor (1992) nicht Unterhaltungserleben, sondern die Abnahme negativen Affekts (mit MACCL; Zuckermann & Lubin, 1965) gemessen. Des Weiteren ist bei Mares und Cantor (1992) diese Abnahme an negativem Affekt an Rezipientenmerkmale gebunden. Schliesslich bleibt der zwischen negativen Emotionen und Unterhaltungserleben ablaufende Prozess auch bei Mills (1993) unklar, der, wie bereits erwähnt, letztlich auf ein Persönlichkeitsmerkmal und damit einen distalen Prädiktor für Unterhaltungserleben rekurriert.

### Das EMR-Modell

Ein vielversprechender theoretischer Ansatz liegt mit dem sog. *Emotions-Metaemotions-Regulationsmodell* (EMR) von Wirth und Schramm (2007a; 2007b) – und dort vor allem auf den Konzepten der *Metaappraisals* und der *Meta-Emotion* vor (s. auch Bartsch et al., 2008; Jäger & Bartsch, 2006). Das Modell basiert auf appraisaltheoretischen Überlegungen. Für ein vertiefteres Verständnis scheint ein Exkurs in appraisaltheoretische

Ansätze angebracht (vgl. (Arnold, 1960; Lazarus, 1991, 2001); Scherer, 2001). Anschliessend wird auf die Konstrukte der Metaappraisals und Metaemotionen eingegangen.

**Appraisaltheorien.** Appraisaltheorien gehen auf Magda Arnold (1960) und Richard Lazarus (1966) zurück, deren Werke massgeblich an der sog. *kognitiven Wende* innerhalb der Emotionspsychologie beteiligt waren (Reisenzein, Meyer, & Schützwohl, 2003; Schorr, 2001). Arnold und Lazarus wenden sich dabei dezidiert gegen behavioristische Theorien, indem sie nicht nur intersubjektiv beobachtbares Verhalten als Objekt wissenschaftlicher Untersuchungen zulassen, sondern vielmehr der Kognition eine zentrale Rolle zuschreiben.

Obwohl es nicht *den* appraisaltheoretischen Ansatz gibt, lassen sich hinsichtlich der verschiedenen Ansätze doch einige Gemeinsamkeiten feststellen. So besteht weitgehende Einigkeit darüber, dass Emotionen das Ergebnis *subjektiver Bewertungen* (engl. appraisals) sind. Objekte, Situationen oder Ereignisse werden demnach auf verschiedenen *Appraisaldimensionen* bewertet. Bei Arnold (1960) entsprechen diese Bewertungen direkten, unmittelbaren und intuitiven Evaluationen, die damit meist nicht einer bewussten, sondern einer automatischen Verarbeitung entspringen<sup>7</sup>. Arnold (1960) unterscheidet drei Appraisaldimensionen: Bewertung, Abwesenheit/Anwesenheit und Bewältigbarkeit (Reisenzein et al., 2003). In ähnlicher Weise unterscheidet Lazarus (1966; s. auch Lazarus, 1991; Lazarus & Folkman, 2008) zwischen *primären* und *sekundären* Appraisals. Mit ersteren schätzt das Individuum die jeweiligen Implikationen (Appraisaldimensionen: Zielrelevanz, Zielkongruenz und Ego-Involvement) einer Situation, eines Objekts, oder eines Ereignisses in Bezug auf das Wohlbefinden der eignen Person ein; mit letzteren schätzt er oder sie seine oder ihre Fähigkeiten oder Möglichkeiten ein, mit diesem Objekt umgehen zu können (Appraisaldimensionen: Schuld vs. Verdienst, Bewältigungspotential und Zukunftserwartungen). Schliesslich meint der Prozess des *Reappraisals* eine Re-evaluierung der jeweiligen Situation und damit eine Veränderung des jeweiligen emotionalen Zustands (Lazarus, 2001). Im Rahmen seines Stimulus-Evaluation-Check-Modells schlägt schliesslich Scherer (2001) (zum Teil) alternative Appraisaldimensionen vor, die nach dem Autor sequentiell ablaufen (Grandjean & Scherer, 2008): Neuheit, Angenehmheit, Zielrelevanz, Bewältigbarkeit und Vereinbarkeit mit internen/externen Normen (s. auch Wirth & Schramm, 2007a; für einen Überblick über verschiedene Appraisaldimensionen verschiedener Autoren vgl. Ellsworth & Scherer, 2003). Ergebnis der Kombination möglicher Ausprägungen dieser Appraisals sind diskrete Emotionen, wie Furcht, Ärger, Wut, Freude oder Traurigkeit, die sich

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<sup>7</sup> Arnold (1960) räumt allerdings ein, dass neben diesen unbewussten auch bewusste Einschätzungen vorgenommen werden können.

auf kognitiver, affektiver, konativer und physiologischer Ebene beschreiben lassen (Scherer, 2001).

Zentral in Lazarus' Emotionstheorie ist das sog. „*Core Relational Theme*“ (Lazarus, 2001, S. 63). Damit ist gewissermassen die Quintessenz einer auf verschiedenen Appraisalschritten basierenden Emotion gemeint. Das Core Relational Theme von Traurigkeit ist nach Lazarus das Vorliegen eines *unwiderruflichen Verlusts* (engl. *irrevocable loss*). Bezogen auf tragische Medieninhalte leuchtet es somit ein, dass Traurigkeit bei einem tragischen Ende, bei dem der Held oder die Heroin meist stirbt, die vorherrschende emotionale Reaktion ist. Im Grunde sollte also lediglich dieses Gefühl der Traurigkeit entstehen, nicht aber Unterhaltungserleben, wie oben definiert. Zur Lösung dieses Problems wurde eine zusätzliche Ebene des emotionalen Erlebens (und damit auch eine zusätzliche Appraisalebene) vorgeschlagen (Bartsch et al., 2008; Oliver, 1993; Wirth & Schramm, 2007a): *Metaemotionen* und *Metaappraisals*.

**Metaemotionen und Metaappraisals.** In Anlehnung an Mayer und Gaschke (1988b) hat Oliver (1993) Unterhaltung als *Metaemotion* konzeptualisiert (s. auch Bartsch et al., 2008; Wirth & Schramm, 2007a; 2007b). Diese Idee ist allerdings bei Weitem nicht neu: bereits 1983 hat Feagin zwischen „*direct response*“ und „*meta-response*“ (S. 97) unterschieden, um damit Unterhaltungserleben bei Tragödien zu erklären. Schliesslich findet sich bei Mills' (1993) Attitude Interpretation Ansatz ein Hinweis auf ein Meta-Erleben. Aus appraisaltheoretischer Sicht resultieren Metaemotionen aus der Bewertung des eigenen emotionalen Erlebens im Zuge von Metaappraisals (Bartsch et al., 2008; Wirth & Schramm, 2007a). Bevor genauer auf diesen Mechanismus eingegangen wird, sollen an dieser Stelle alternative Konzeptionen von Metaemotionen besprochen und problematisiert werden.

Grundsätzlich kann jede Emotion auch als Metaemotion verstanden werden. Gottman, Katz und Hooven (1997) gehen gar so weit, emotionale Reaktionen auf die Reaktionen eines anderen als Metaemotion zu bezeichnen. Eine derartige Konzeption von Metaemotionen ist allerdings im vorliegenden Zusammenhang wenig zielführend, da der Unterschied zwischen Emotionen und Metaemotionen zu stark verschwimmt.

Mayer und Gaschke (1988a) konzipieren Metaemotionen als mehrdimensionales Konstrukt mit den Dimensionen (1) Kontrollierbarkeit, (2) Klarheit, (3) Akzeptierbarkeit, (4) Typizität und (5) Stabilität. Sie geben damit wertvolle Hinweise auf das Konstrukt der Metaappraisals, vermischen aber letztlich kognitive Antezedenzbedingungen (i.e., Metaappraisals) und affektives Ergebnis (i.e., Metaemotionen).

Oliver (1993) orientiert sich in der theoretischen Konzeption stark an Mayer und Gaschke (1988), operationalisiert Metaemotionen im Rahme ihrer Sad-Film-Scale eher als generelle Präferenzen (oder als Gründe für diese Präferenzen) für traurige Filme (Schramm & Wirth, 2010).

Dohle (2011) betrachtet Metaemotionen als „habitualisierte Gratifikationserwartungen“ (S. 170). Er fasst das Konzept dabei sehr weit, indem er sie als fünf-dimensionales Konstrukt konzipiert: die fünf Faktoren, von denen sich faktoranalytisch lediglich vier finden liessen sind die folgenden: (1) Inhalte/Charaktere und entstehendes Mitgefühl, (2) Ablenkung von der eigenen Person, (3) Beschäftigung mit der eigenen Person/Selbstreflexion, (3) Einflüsse der Rezeptionssituation/sozial ausgerichtetes Verhalten<sup>8</sup> und (5) Genuss der Traurigkeit. Lediglich die letzte Dimension – Genuss der Traurigkeit – lässt sich in Einklang mit der hier verwendeten, appraisaltheoretisch fundierten Konzeption von Metaemotionen in Einklang bringen.

Schliesslich liegt mit den sog. Makroemotion (Früh, Wunsch, & Klopp, 2004; Früh, 2006) ein mit Metaemotionen vergleichbares Konzept vor. Innerhalb der Triadisch-Dynamischen Unterhaltungstheorie werden Makroemotionen als hierarchisch übergeordnete Emotionen –eine Art „globale Beschreibung der Rezeption“ (Wirth & Schramm, 2007, S. 165) – konzipiert, die mit Mikroemotionen transaktional verknüpft sind. In einer empirischen Studie konnte Wunsch (2006) die von Mikroemotionen unabhängige Existenz von Makroemotionen belegen; den Prozess der *Valenztransformation*, also der Umwandlung negativer Mikroemotionen in positive Makroemotionen, hat Wunsch (2006) allerdings nicht gemessen und infolgedessen auch nicht nachweisen können. Bereits bei Früh (2006; Früh, Schulze, & Wunsch, 2002) bleibt die Natur der sog. affektiven Makroregeln weitgehen unklar (Wirth & Schramm, 2007a; 2007b). Früh et al. (2002) sprechen von vier Prozessen, durch die Mikroemotionen zu Makroemotionen transformiert werden: (1) Auslassen, (2) Selektieren, (3) Generalisieren und (4) Konstruieren/Integrieren und rekurren damit auf van Dijks (1980) Überlegungen zu Textverstehensprozessen und damit auf kognitive Prozesse, die kaum auf emotionale Prozesse anwendbar sind (Wirth & Schramm, 2007b).

Aus einer appraisaltheoretischen Perspektive modellieren Wirth und Schramm (2007a; 2007b) die Metaemotion Unterhaltung als Ergebnis von Bewertungen des eigenen emotionalen Erlebens im Zuge sog. *Metaappraisals*. Metaappraisals sind konzeptionell wie klassische Appraisalprozesse zu behandeln. Sie umschliessen jedoch als Besonderheit auch

<sup>8</sup> Dieser Faktor liess sich empirisch nicht bestätigen (Dohle, 2011); lediglich die vier anderen – und auch die nicht methodisch einwandfrei: Erstens lagen bei der exploratorischen Faktoranalyse Doppelladungen vor und die Fit-Indices der konfirmatorischen Faktoranalyse waren zum Teil nicht ausreichend (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Schermelleh-Engel, Moosbrugger, & Müller, 2003).

die eigenen Emotionen als Einschätzungsgegenstand. Folglich kann davon ausgegangen werden, dass während der Rezeption nicht nur der Medieninhalt, sondern darüber hinaus auch das eigene emotionale Erleben Gegenstand von Appraisals sein kann (Bartsch et al., 2008; Jäger & Bartsch, 2006; Wirth & Schramm, 2007). Als Resultat solcher Metaappraisals entsteht eine *Metaemotion* (Bartsch et al., 2008; Jäger & Bartsch, 2006; Wirth & Schramm, 2007a). Wirth und Schramm (2007a; 2007b) und Wunsch (2006) sprechen in diesem Zusammenhang von Valenztransformation, also der Transformation der negativen Traurigkeit in die positive Metaemotion Unterhaltungserleben. Metaappraisals sind im EMR-Modell letztlich als zwischen Traurigkeit und Unterhaltungserleben vermittelnde Mediatoren konzipiert.

Vor dem Hintergrund des EMR-Modells haben Schramm und Wirth (2010) eine experimentelle Studie durchgeführt, bei der sie die Auswirkung verschiedener Filmversionen auf Metaappraisalprozesse untersuchten. Dabei manipulierten die Autoren das Ende des Films *Pay it Forward* (USA, 2000, Regie: Mimi Leder), indem sie es mit verschiedenen Musikstücken unterlegten. Bei der sog. *Affective-Upbeat-Version* wurde das traurige Ende mit einem positiv stimmenden Popsong („*Calling the Angel*“ von Jill Holly) unterlegt; die sog. *Affective-Downbeat-Version* enthielt dasselbe Ende, das jedoch mit einem eher traurigen Stück (der „*Mondscheinsonate*“ von Ludwig van Beethoven). Bei der dritten Version des Films – die Autoren sprechen von der sog. *Cognitive-Switch-Version* – wird ein anderes Ende gezeigt, bei dem Trevor, der Protagonist des Films, der im Laufe der Geschichte umgekommen ist, in einem Fernsehinterview zu sehen ist, das er vor seinem Tod zu seinem „Glücksprinzip“ gegeben hat. Die Studie ergab unter anderem, dass bei zwei der drei postulierten Metaappraisalprozesse (die Autoren sprechen von Barrieren der Valenztransformation<sup>9</sup>, die letztere also eher verhindern) bei der Affective-Downbeat-Version am ausgeprägtesten waren. Bei der am wenigsten traurigen Version des Films, der Cognitive-Switch-Version, waren sowohl die Sadness-Salience als auch die Triviality-Salience am niedrigsten<sup>10</sup>. Gleichzeitig war die Traurigkeit in der Affective-Downbeat-Version am höchsten. Metaappraisalprozesse scheinen damit am wenigsten aktiv zu sein, wenn sie eigentlich am ehesten notwendig wären, nämlich in der Version, in der die Traurigkeit am stärksten ausgeprägt war. Des Weiteren bietet die Studie keinen expliziten Hinweis auf die Valenztransformation und damit auf den Mediatorstatus von Metaappraisals. In der

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<sup>9</sup> Genauer gesagt, fanden die Autoren nach der Reformulierung der Sad-Film-Scale von Oliver (1993) in eine State-Form und einer anschließenden exploratorischen Faktoranalyse drei Faktoren: *Sadness-Salience*, *Triviality-Salience* und *Avoid Immersion*.

<sup>10</sup> Allerdings muss hier kritisch angemerkt werden, dass beim Design von Schramm und Wirth (2010) die interne Validität nicht einwandfrei gegeben ist, da sich das Ende der Cognitive Switch Version doch sehr stark von den beiden anderen Enden unterscheidet. Damit ist letztlich nicht klar, was genau zu diesem Resultaten geführt hat.



Diskussion erwähnen die Autoren zwar negative Korrelationen zwischen den Metaappraisalprozessen und dem Unterhaltungserleben (je weniger Hindernisse, bzw. je kleiner die Barrieren, desto mehr Unterhaltungserleben), eine positive Korrelation zwischen der Traurigkeit und der Sadness-Salience und eine negative Korrelation zwischen der Traurigkeit und dem Unterhaltungserleben, die im Grunde dem Postulat eines Paradoxons (i.e., hohes Unterhaltungserleben bei gleichzeitig hoher Traurigkeit) widerspricht. Schliesslich weisen die Autoren selbst auf Einschränkungen bei der Operationalisierung der Metaappraisalprozesse, bzw. auf eine entsprechende Forschungslücke hin: “Future studies that aim at deeper investigations of the sad-film paradox are therefore strongly advised to include additional measures of the meta-appraisals, as here we concentrated on re-formulating the Sad-Film Scale“ (Schramm & Wirth, 2010, S. 332).

### **Studie I: It’s Right to Be Sad**

Aufbauend auf den Überlegungen von Wirth und Schramm (2007a; 2007b) erbringt die erste der vier dissertationsrelevanten Studien (Studie I, Hofer & Wirth, 2012) erstmals einen empirischen Nachweis der Valenztransformation. Dabei wird den theoretischen Überlegungen Wirths und Schramms (2007a; 2007b) folgend argumentiert, dass Primäremotionen durch *Metaappraisals* bewertet werden. Im Zuge dieser Metaappraisalprozesse kann eine negative Emotion, wenn sie positiv bewertet wird, in eine positive Metaemotion umgewandelt werden.

Die Studie folgte einem einfaktoriellen Experimentaldesign. Dabei wurde ein Film (*Dancer in the Dark*, USA, 2000, Regie: Lars von Trier) so manipuliert, dass die eine Version ein glückliches Ende enthielt, bei der die Protagonistin am Ende überlebt und ein glückliches Leben weiterführt, und die andere Version ein negatives Ende, bei der die Protagonistin am Ende stirbt. Mittels eines multiplen Mediatormodells (Metaappraisals mediieren das Verhältnis zwischen Traurigkeit und Unterhaltungserleben) konnte gezeigt werden, dass diese Metaappraisalprozesse nur im Falle eines tragischen Endes ablaufen, nicht aber, wenn der Film ein positives Ende hat. Statistisch betrachtet bedeutet das, dass nur im Falle eines negativen Endes *signifikante indirekte Effekte* vorlagen. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass vor allem eine Bewertung des eigenen emotionalen Erlebens nach *internen* und *externen Normen* die Valenztransformation bei negativem Ende begünstigt (bei positivem Ende scheint, auch das hat die Studie gezeigt, keine Valenztransformation vonnöten zu sein). Letztlich liegt mit der Studie ein *moderiertes Mediationsmodell* vor: das Filmende moderiert die indirekten Effekte der Traurigkeit auf die Metaappraisals, bzw. von den Metaappraisals auf das Unterhaltungserleben. Zudem verschwand unter Einbezug der Mediatoren die positive

Korrelation zwischen der Traurigkeit und dem Unterhaltungserleben beim tragischen Ende, die letztlich das Sad Film Paradoxon widerspiegelt.

### **Mehrwert und Implikationen der Studie**

Mit Studie I liegt zum ersten Mal ein empirischer auf einer Experimentalstudie basierender Nachweis der im EMR-Modell postulierten Mediatorprozesse vor, der damit der Valenztransformation als Prozess gerecht wird. Als weiteren Mehrwert der Studie kann die Tatsache genannt werden, dass erstmals eine Messung von Metaappraisals vorliegt, die der appraisaltheoretischen Modellierung im Rahmen des EMR-Modells gerecht wird. Die Messung von Metaappraisals bei Schramm und Wirth (2010) basiert, wie oben bereits erwähnt, auf der Sad-Film-Scale von Oliver (1993), die, wie Wünsch (2006) bemerkt, zwar „das Problem der Valenztransformation berücksichtigt und abbildet“ (S. 62), die Bewertung und deren Ergebnis aber letztlich vermischt, so dass eine Analyse (im wahrsten Sinne des Wortes) des Prozesses und seines Ergebnisses nicht möglich ist. Bisher lag also noch keine explizite Messung der Bewertung des eigenen emotionalen Erlebens in Rezeptionssituationen vor, welche die theoretisch postulierte Trennung zwischen Metaappraisal und Metaemotion auch abbildet. Der wichtigste Mediator in Studie I war die normative und letztlich die moralische Evaluation des eigenen emotionalen Erlebens.

Ein ebenfalls auf Mediatorprozessen basierende Erklärung des Sad-Film-Paradoxons findet sich bei Knobloch-Westerwick et al. (2012). In ihrer Studie wird die Beziehung zwischen Traurigkeit und Unterhaltungserleben durch selbst-fokussierte Gedanken mediert. Die Beziehung zwischen der bei der Rezeption erlebten Traurigkeit und den selbst-fokussierten Gedanken wird mit Verweis darauf, dass negativer Affekt zu elaborierten Kognitionen führt (Bless, Böhner, Schwarz, & Strack, 1990), erklärt. Zusätzlich fanden die Autoren zwei weitere Mediatoren zwischen der Beziehung zwischen Traurigkeit und Unterhaltungserleben: Gedanken, die auf Personen im Film fokussierten, und Gedanken über das Leben im Allgemeinen. Auch Ahn et al. (2012) erklären die Beziehung zwischen Traurigkeit und Unterhaltungserleben mit einem zwischen den beiden Rezeptionsprozessen liegenden Mediator, nämlich dem wahrgenommenen Realitätsgrad. Die Autoren argumentieren, dass mit der erlebten Traurigkeit bei der Rezeption eines tragischen Medieninhalts auch die Wahrnehmung dieses Medieninhalts als realitätsnah zunimmt und dass diese Realitätswahrnehmung schliesslich Unterhaltungserleben begünstigt. Der Pfad zwischen Realitätswahrnehmung und Unterhaltungserleben ist vor dem Hintergrund von Forschungen zum Zusammenhang zwischen wahrgenommener Realität und Unterhaltungserleben (z.B., Hall, 2003) weitgehend klar. Allerdings bleibt in Ahns et al.

(2012) Argumentation weitgehend offen, warum Traurigkeit zu erhöhter Realitätswahrnehmung führen sollte. Sie verweisen zwar analog zu Knobloch-Westerwick et al. (2012) auf elaboriertere Kognitionen aufgrund negativer Emotionen, die Gleichsetzung dieser Kognitionen mit Realitätswahrnehmung scheint aber etwas arbiträr. Dennoch liefert auch diese Studie Hinweise darauf, dass tragische Medieninhalte deswegen zu einem positiven Rezeptionserleben führen können, weil sie RezipientInnen über die Realität und damit auch über ihr eigenes Leben und dessen tieferen Sinn reflektieren lassen.

Mit Studie I und den Ergebnissen von Knobloch-Westerwick et al. (2012) und Ahn et al. (2012) liegen wichtige Hinweise dafür vor, dass sich ein Unterhaltungserleben nicht nur durch Genuss, Freude und Entspannung konstituiert, sondern auch durch Gedanken über Werte, Normen, den Sinn der eigenen Existenz oder des Lebens an sich und die Wertschätzung von engen Beziehungen. Diese Gedanken scheinen dazu zu führen, dass die Rezeption eines tragischen Medieninhalts trotz oder gerade *wegen* der erlebten Traurigkeit positiv erlebt wird.

Ein Leben und Handeln und damit auch ein Urteilen nach zentralen Normen und Wertvorstellungen und ein Streben nach einem tieferen Sinn bilden die Basis eines Glückskonzepts, das bereits im vierten Jahrhundert vor Christus vom griechischen Philosophen Aristoteles (Aristoteles, Rowe, & Broadie, 2002) formuliert wurde: *eudaimonisches Wohlbefinden* (engl. eudaimonic well-being) – ein *ethisches Prinzip*, das letztlich die Frage nach menschlichem Wohlbefinden und dem guten Leben beantworten sollte. Hedonistisches Wohlbefinden, das etwa durch Geld, Amusement und Entspannung oder allgemein durch „the belief that one is getting the important things one wants, as well as certain pleasant affects that normally go along with this belief“ (Kraut, 1979, S. 178) erreicht werden kann, betrachtet Aristoteles als untergeordnetes Ziel. Vielmehr sei das Ziel menschlicher Existenz die intrinsisch motivierte Selbstelaboration. Bei eudaimonischem Wohlbefinden liegt der Fokus auf dem Lebensinhalt und der sinnvollen und autonomen Lebensführung nach eigenen Wertvorstellungen und positiven Beziehungen zu anderen Menschen. Jeder Mensch soll – und das ist schliesslich das Hauptargument Aristoteles‘ – entsprechend seinem *Daimon* (damit ist das Potential einer Person und die Erfüllung dieses Potentials gemeint) leben.

Entsprechend dieser Überlegungen legen Oliver und Bartsch (2010) eine alternative Unterhaltungskonzeption vor – *Appreciation*, die nicht mehr auf hedonistischen, sondern auf eudaimonischen Prinzipien (Waterman, 1990; 1993; 2008) basiert. Oliver und Bartsch (2010) fanden in drei Studien empirische (i.e., faktoranalytische) Evidenz dafür, dass Menschen bei

der Filmrezeption nicht nur Gefühle der Spannung (engl. Suspense) und Freude (engl. fun) empfinden, sondern auch Gefühle der tieferen Bedeutung oder Ergriffenheit erleben: Appreciation<sup>11</sup>. Die Autoren definieren Appreciation als “experiential state that is characterized by the perception of deeper meaning, the feeling of being moved, and the motivation to elaborate on thoughts and feelings inspired by the experience” (Oliver & Bartsch, 2010, S. 76). Kern des Appreciation-Konzepts ist also somit die erlebte Sinnhaftigkeit und Bedeutsamkeit.

Eine offene Frage bisheriger Studien blieb, welche Mechanismen, bzw. Faktoren ein solches Rezeptionserleben fördern können. Des Weiteren fehlte bis anhin eine experimentelle Studie, die einen kausalen Nachweis erbringt, dass es sich bei hedonistischem Unterhaltungserleben, wie oben definiert, in der Tat um ein von Appreciation unterscheidbares Konstrukt handelt. Ein theoretischer Ansatz, der als Kern die Erklärung der menschlichen Suche nach Bedeutsamkeit und Sinnhaftigkeit enthält, findet sich in der sog. *Terror-Management-Theory*. Entsprechend liefert dieser Ansatz einen äusserst plausiblen Moderator von Appreciation, nämlich die sog. *Mortalitätssalienz*. So schreibt Klimmt (2011) „[...] complex modes of entertainment experiences [such as appreciation, MH] may somehow be connected to issues of death and dying“ (S. 36). Etwas konkreter gehen Oliver und Hartmann (2010) auf den Zusammenhang zwischen Mortalitätssalienz und dem Erleben trauriger und bedeutungsvoller Filme ein: „[...]when entertainment reminds viewers of the idea that life is fleeting, the value of additional virtues such as endurance, inner beauty, and human relationships become more salient and therefore meaningful“ (S. 144). Ein Exkurs in die *Terror-Management-Theory* (Greenberg et al., 1997) scheint für ein vertiefteres Verständnis angebracht.

### **Terror-Management-Theorie**

Gemäss der *Terror-Management-Theory* (TMT) führen die intellektuellen Fähigkeiten des Menschen dazu, dass er sich seiner selbst und damit auch seiner Verwundbarkeit und seiner Sterblichkeit bewusst ist. Diese Bewusstheit löst Angst aus.

Die Möglichkeiten, mit der Angst vor der Unvermeidbarkeit des Todes umzugehen, sog. *Anxiety-Buffers* zu aktivieren. Dabei werden zwei Arten von *Anxiety-Buffers* unterschieden. Die verstärkte *Rückbesinnung auf kulturelle Werte* und eine *positive Selbsteinschätzung*.

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<sup>11</sup> Genauer gesagt fanden Oliver und Bartsch (2010) zwei Faktoren, die dieses Rezeptionserleben charakterisieren: *moving/thought-provoking* und *lasting impression*. Während der erste Faktor eingehende Gedanken und ein Gefühl der Ergriffenheit widerspiegelt, enthält der zweite Faktor Items, die eine länger anhaltende Beschäftigung mit dem Gesehenen messen, wobei offen bleibt, wie diese Beschäftigung genau geartet ist.

Eine Möglichkeit, mit der Angst, die bei der Salienz der eigenen Sterblichkeit einher geht, besteht darin, sich eine kulturelle Weltanschauung bzw. ein System aus kulturellen Werten und Sinngebungen zu schaffen, die in der Lage sind, dem Leben Bedeutung zu geben, die über die eigene Sterblichkeit hinausgeht (Harmon-Jones, Simon, Greenberg, Pyszczynski, & et al, 1997; Rosenblatt, Greenberg, Solomon, Pyszczynski, & et al, 1989; Routledge et al., 2010). Diese kulturellen Werte werden aktiviert (müssen um der Angstreduktion willen aktiviert bzw. bestätigt werden), sobald Menschen ihre Sterblichkeit salient gemacht wird. Das wiederum führt zu starken negativen Reaktionen auf Darstellungen von Personen, die nicht nach diesen Werten handeln, diese Werte damit in Frage stellen oder andere Werte pflegen (Rosenblatt, Goldenberg, Solomon, Pyszczynski, & Lyon, 1989; Rosenblatt et al., 1989), bzw. zu positiven Reaktionen, wenn (medienvermittelte) Personen diese Werte bestätigen oder gar übertreffen (Rosenblatt et al., 1989). Eine andere Konsequenz aus der Rückbesinnung auf kulturell gewachsene Werte besteht in einer negativen Einstellungen gegenüber Stimuli, welche die Wahrnehmung der Welt als bedeutungsvoll stören (Landau, Greenberg, Solomon, Pyszczynski, & Martens, 2006).

Ein alternativer Weg, mit der Angst vor dem Tod umzugehen, der mit der Aktivierung kultureller Werte eng zusammenhängt, geht über eine positive Selbsteinschätzung (Greenberg et al., 1997; Routledge et al., 2010). Diese ist nach Harmon-Jones et al. (1997; s. auch Simon, Arndt, Greenberg, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 1998) definiert als die Überzeugung, man lebe nach den durch das jeweilige Wertesystem vorgegebenen Standards.

Diese beiden Strategien (die Rückbesinnung auf kulturelle Werte und die positive Selbsteinschätzung) werden im Rahmen der TMT als *distale Abwehrstrategien* (engl. distal defenses) betrachtet, die meist unbewusst gewählt werden. Diese Strategien sind eher auf dem sog. *experiential System*<sup>12</sup> anzusiedeln (Epstein, 1994; Simon et al., 1997(Pyszczynski, Greenberg, Solomon, & Pyszczynski, 1999). Davon unterscheiden die Autoren *proximale Abwehrstrategien* (engl. proximal defenses), die letztlich darin bestehen, sich aktiv von Gedanken an den Tod abzulenken.

Die Terror-Management-Perspektive wurde erst in einer empirischen Studie hinsichtlich ihres Einflusses auf das Unterhaltungserleben bei der Rezeption eines tragischen Medieninhalts angewandt. So fanden (Goldenberg et al., 1999), dass das Mögen des Protagonisten einer tragischen Geschichte (im Gegensatz zu einer neutralen) bei Mortalitätssalienz stärker ausfielen als bei fehlender Mortalitätssalienz. Auch das

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<sup>12</sup> In seiner Cognitive-Experiential Self-Theory unterscheidet Epstein (1994) zwei Systemen der kognitiven Verarbeitung: das erste, rationale System charakterisiert er als deliberatives kognitiv aufwändiges System, das in der Regel auf sprachlicher Aktivität basiert. Das zweite, sog. experiential System basiert auf unbewussten, schnell ablaufenden kognitiven Operationen, wie zum Beispiel der automatischen Aufmerksamkeitsallokation (Lang (2000).

Unterhaltungserleben fiel in dieser Gruppe stärker aus; die Probanden in der Mortalitätssalienzgruppe fühlten sich von dem tragischen Medieninhalt stärker Unterhalten als vom fröhlichen. Die Ergebnisse wurden von den Autoren so interpretiert, dass die Rezeption einer tragischen Geschichte eine Möglichkeit darstellt, sich in einer sicheren (i.e., medienvermittelten) Umgebung mit dem beängstigenden Thema der Vergänglichkeit der menschlichen Existenz auseinanderzusetzen. Diese Argumentation widerspricht auf den ersten Blick der Terror-Management-Perspektive, wonach Menschen eine Konfrontation mit der menschlichen Vergänglichkeit meiden. Diesem Einwand begegnen Goldenberg et al. (1999) damit, dass traurige Filme aufgrund ihrer Fiktionalität<sup>13</sup> weniger persönliche Relevanz für den Rezipienten haben.

Die Mortalitätssalienz dürfte sich auch auf Appreciation auswirken, allerdings in einer anderen Art und Weise: Wenn Menschen daran erinnert werden, dass ihr Leben vergänglich ist, führt das zu einer Suche bzw. zu einem erhöhten Bedürfnis nach *Sinnhaftigkeit* und *Bedeutsamkeit*. Dieses Bedürfnis kann, wie die zahlreichen Studien der Gruppe um Greenberg gezeigt haben, durch die Aktivierung kultureller Werte befriedigt werden. Dies dürfte auch der Fall sein, wenn diese kulturellen Werte in einem Medieninhalt dargestellt werden. Damit können Filme im Sinne eines Anxiety-Buffers wirken, indem sie RezipientInnen bei Mortalitätssalienz zu Gedanken über zentrale Fragen der menschlichen (und damit auch der individuellen) Existenz anregen und ihnen zeigen, dass ihr eigenes Leben oder das menschliche Leben im Allgemeinen, das nach dem eigenen Tod weiterbesteht, einen Sinn hat. Dadurch können Menschen schliesslich besser mit ihrer eigenen Sterblichkeit, bzw. der Angst davor, umgehen. Dies sollte besonders dann der Fall sein, wenn ein Filmcharakter in besonderem Masse nach zentralen Werten und Normen handelt.

### **Studie II: Mortality Salience, Meaning, Enjoyment, and Appreciation**

Studie II (Hofer, 2013) folgte einem zwei-faktoriellen Experimentaldesign. Die üblicherweise im Rahmen der TMT-Forschung angewandte Mortalitätssalienz (vs. eine Kontrollgruppe) bildete den ersten Faktor. Die ProbandInnen in der Mortalitätssalienzgruppe wurden gebeten, aufzuschreiben, was ihrer Meinung nach bei ihrem Tod mit ihnen passiert und wie sie sich dabei fühlen. Der zweite, quasi-experimentelle Faktor war die Suche nach einem Sinn im Leben (engl. search for meaning in life, Steger, Frazier, Oishi, & Kaler, 2006). Die Suche nach einem Sinn im Leben ist definiert als “the strength, intensity, and activity of people’s desire and efforts *to establish and/or augment* their understanding of the meaning, significance, and purpose of their lives” (Steger et al., 2008, S. 200). Steger, Oishi und

<sup>13</sup> Die Autoren sprechen von einer „safe vicarious expression“ (Goldenberg et al., 1999, S. 318). In diesem Zusammenhang könnte auch mit Vorderers Vorderer (2001) Unterhaltungskonzeption als Spiel argumentiert werden.

Kesebir (2011) betrachten die Suche nach dem Sinn im Leben als eine Art Schema, das die Aufmerksamkeit auf Sinnfragen lenkt und diesen auch eine grosse Wichtigkeit zuschreibt. Als Stimulus diente ein Film, in dem eine junge Frau auf äusserst selbstlose Weise das Leben ihrer Familie nach ihrem eigenen Tod organisiert (*My Life Without Me*, Spanien/Kanada, 2003, Regie: Isabel Coixet). Am Ende des Films stirbt die Frau.

Es wurde angenommen, dass sich Mortalitätssalienz positiv auf Appreciation auswirkt; der Effekt sollte des Weiteren durch die Suche nach einem Sinn im Leben moderiert werden. Zentrales Ergebnis von Studie II war, dass der Effekt der Mortalitätssalienz auf Appreciation in der Tat nur bei Probanden auftrat, die in hohem Masse auf der Suche nach dem Sinn ihres eigenen Lebens (Steger et al., 2011; Steger et al., 2006; Steger et al., 2008) sind. Die Studie hat gezeigt, dass Menschen, die zu einem hohen Ausmass auf der Suche nach einem Sinn in ihrem Leben sind, bei Mortalitätssalienz ein höheres Ausmass an Appreciation erlebten als Menschen, die eher nicht auf der Suche nach einem Sinn in ihrem Leben sind. Bezüglich des hedonistischen Unterhaltungserlebens zeigte sich ein gegenteiliges Muster: Probanden, die in einem hohen Ausmass auf der Suche nach einem Sinn und einer Bedeutung ihres Lebens sind, erlebten ein höheres Ausmass an hedonistischem Unterhaltungserleben, wenn ihre Mortalität im Vorfeld *nicht* salient gemacht wurde.

### **Mehrwert und Implikationen der Studie**

Zentrales Ergebnis von Studie II war, dass Appreciation besonders dann erlebt wird, wenn erstens eine durch Mortalitätssalienz bedingte Notwendigkeit für eine Suche nach Sinnhaftigkeit und Bedeutsamkeit besteht und wenn zweitens diese Notwendigkeit bereits in der Persönlichkeitsstruktur von RezipientInnen stark ausgeprägt ist. Des Weiteren hat die Studie als erste einen experimentellen Nachweis dafür geliefert, dass es sich bei Enjoyment (i.e., hedonistischem Unterhaltungserleben) und Appreciation um zwei unterschiedliche, bzw. deutlich unterscheidbare Konstrukte handelt. Schliesslich hat die Studie gezeigt, dass tragische Medieninhalte offenbar nicht nur eine hedonistische Form von Unterhaltungserleben auslösen können, die, wie die Studie I gezeigt hat, durch den Mechanismus der Valenztransformation entstehen kann, sondern auch Bedürfnisse nach Bedeutsamkeit und Sinnhaftigkeit erfüllen können. Damit bietet sich die Möglichkeit, den Begriff „tragischer Medieninhalt“ zu hinterfragen, bzw. zu erweitern (s. unten, vgl. auch Oliver & Bartsch, 2011).

Auf methodischer Ebene muss kritisch angemerkt werden, dass mit dem vorliegenden Design nicht zwischen proximalen und distalen Anxiety-Buffers unterschieden werden kann. Da der Film, den die ProbandInnen beider Experimentalgruppen gesehen haben, selbst

Mortalität salient macht und die abhängigen Variablen mehr oder weniger direkt nach dem Stimulus abgefragt wurden, kann keine Unterscheidung zwischen diesen Arten des Umgangs mit Mortalitätssalienz getroffen werden. Daher sollten nachfolgende Studien, einen weiteren Faktor einbauen, bei dem eine Experimentalgruppe eine Ablenkungsaufgabe zwischen Stimulus und Abfrage bekommt, um damit tatsächlich zwischen distalen und proximalen Abwehrmechanismen unterscheiden zu können. In zahlreichen Untersuchungen zur TMT zeigte sich nämlich, erst nach einer gewissen Zeit, bzw. nach einer Ablenkung von der zuvor salient gemachten Mortalität, die oben genannten distalen Anxiety-Buffers angewandt werden. Direkt nach der Salientmachung der eigenen Sterblichkeit wenden Menschen proximale Abwehrmechanismen an (Pyszczynski et al., 1999).

Die Ergebnisse von Studie II lassen die Möglichkeit einer Erweiterung des Terminus „tragischer Medieninhalt“ (oder konkret: trauriger Film<sup>14</sup>) zu. Nicht nur die dargestellte Tragik, also die von Vogel (2007) erwähnte zerstörte Liebe, das Ende einer innigen Freundschaft, die Krankheit des Protagonisten, und die ausgelöste Trauer, die sich entsprechend der oben genannten Definitionen tragischer Medieninhalte besonders am Ende des jeweiligen Medieninhalts zeigt, sondern auch die *im Verlauf* der jeweiligen Geschichte Darstellung der Einzigartigkeit und Grossartigkeit der Liebe, des tiefgreifenden Vertrauens und des bedingungslosen Füreinander-Einstehens oder des Meisterns krankheitsbedingter Einschränkungen und die dadurch hervorgerufene wahrgenommene *Bedeutsamkeit* oder *Sinnhaftigkeit* (engl. *meaningfulness*), sind es, die solche Medieninhalte ausmachen. Daher soll der Terminus „tragischer Medieninhalt“ mit dem Terminus „*bedeutsamer Medieninhalt*“ erweitert werden (vgl. Oliver & Bartsch, 2011).

Bei näherer Betrachtung des Konzepts der Appreciation fällt sowohl auf theoretischer als auch auf empirischer Ebene auf, dass dessen Auflösungsgrad, bzw. dessen Komplexität als sehr gering einzustufen ist. So wird nicht klar, wodurch sich dieses Rezeptionserleben genau auszeichnet. Zusätzlich bleibt weitgehend offen, *worüber* Rezipienten nachdenken, wenn sie sich einen bedeutungsvollen Film anschauen. Damit verlagert sich die zentrale Frage, warum sich Menschen bei der Rezeption tragischer Medieninhalte trotz der erlebten Traurigkeit unterhalten können, auf die Frage, *wie sich die erlebte Sinnhaftigkeit und Bedeutsamkeit bei der Rezeption eines bedeutsamen Medieninhalts theoretisch und empirisch fassen lassen*.

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<sup>14</sup> Die vorliegenden dissertationsrelevanten Studien haben ausschliesslich mit audiovisuellen Stimuli gearbeitet. Es sei daher an dieser Stelle explizit darauf hingewiesen, dass die postulierten Prozesse durchaus auch bei der Lektüre eines Romans oder bei der Rezeption eines Hörspiels aktiv sein können. Ob dabei Niveauunterschiede zwischen den einzelnen Medien festgestellt werden können, bleibt eine empirische Frage; strukturelle Unterschiede sollten kaum zu erwarten sein, aber letztlich ist auch das eine empirische Frage.



### **Eudaimonisches Unterhaltungserleben**

Basierend auf dem aristotelischen (i.e., eudaimonischen) Glücksbegriff haben sich Forschungen zum menschlichen Wohlbefinden (engl. Well-Being) mit dem Konzept des sog. *eudaimonischen Wohlbefindens* beschäftigt und damit eine alternative Konzeption zu gängigen Konzepten menschlichen Wohlbefindens, die auf hedonistischen Prinzipien basieren (z.B., Kahneman, Diener, & Schwarz, 2003), vorgelegt (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryan, Huta, & Deci, 2008; Ryff, 1989a; 1998b; Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Ryff & Singer, 2006). Eudaimonisches Wohlbefinden wird von Ryff und Kollegen und auch im Rahmen der Self-Determination-Theory (SDT) als mehrdimensionales Konstrukt mit den Dimensionen Autonomie (engl. autonomy), Kompetenz (engl. competence), Selbstakzeptanz (engl. self-acceptance) positive Beziehungen zu anderen Menschen (engl. positive relations with others, bzw. relatedness), Lebenssinn (engl. purpose in life) und Persönliches Wachstum (engl. personal growth) betrachtet und beinhaltet Gefühle der Herausforderung und Anstrengung im Zuge intrinsisch motivierter Selbstelaboration (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Singer, 2006; Waterman, 1993).

Vor dem Hintergrund der (SDT) (Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2001; Ryan et al., 2008) argumentieren Tamborini und Kollegen (Tamborini et al., 2011; Tamborini, Bowman, Eden, Grizzard, & Organ, 2010), dass Unterhaltungserleben nicht nur bezüglich seiner positiven Valenz, sondern als Befriedigung dreier basaler menschlicher Bedürfnisse, nämlich dem Bedürfnis nach *Kompetenz*, *Autonomie* und *Verbundenheit* konzipiert werden sollte. Allerdings war die abhängige Variable in den Studien von Tamborini et al. (2010; 2011) hedonistisches Unterhaltungserleben (die Befriedigung der drei Grundbedürfnisse waren Prädiktoren, bzw. Mediatoren).

Das Konzept des *eudaimonischen Unterhaltungserlebens* (s. Studie III, Wirth, Hofer, & Schramm, 2012) wendet die oben genannten Dimensionen eudaimonischen Wohlbefindens auf die Rezeption bedeutsamer Medieninhalte an und überwindet damit gleichzeitig konzeptuelle Schwächen des Appreciation-Konzepts. Anders als Tamborini et al. (2010; 2011) wird dabei nicht an Mediatorprozessen, sondern direkt bei der abhängigen Variable angesetzt. Eudaimonisches Unterhaltungserleben wird dabei als fünf-dimensionales Konstrukt konzipiert. Die fünf Dimensionen sind die folgenden: (1) *Verbundenheit* (engl. relatedness), (2) *Aktivierung zentraler Werte* (engl. activation of central values), (3) *Kompetenzerleben und persönliches Wachstum* (engl. competence/personal growth), (4) *Lebenssinn und Selbstakzeptanz* (engl. purpose in life/self-acceptance) und (5) *Autonomie* (engl. autonomy).

## **Verbundenheit**

Verbundenheit “refers to feeling connected to [...] others“ (Ryan et al., 2008). Auch Ryff (1989) nennt als eine Dimension eudaimonischen Wohlbefindens „positive relations with others“ (S. 1072). Sie nennt dort die Wichtigkeit von freundschaftlichen und engen Beziehungen zu anderen Menschen. Übertragen auf die Medienrezeptionssituation können die Beziehung und die Verbundenheit mit Filmcharakteren eine gratifikatorische Wirkung haben und somit als Dimension eudaimonischen Unterhaltungserlebens aufgefasst werden<sup>15</sup>. Eine deutliche Parallele findet sich bei Oliver’s (2008) *Tender Affective States*, die sie als „feelings associated with human connectedness“ (S. 44) definiert. Und auch bei Bartsch (Bartsch, 2012b) findet sich eine Parallele im Faktor *emotional Engagement with Characters*. Allerdings handelt es sich dabei um ein Motiv und nicht um einen Prozess.

## **Aktivierung zentraler Werte**

Eudaimonisches Wohlbefinden kann als Aktivierung der Prinzipien und Glaubenssätze angesehen werden, die eine Person ausmachen und nach denen sie handelt. Das Erleben intensiver Emotionen bei der Rezeption eines bedeutungsvollen Medieninhalts kann als Aktivierung zentraler Werte verstanden werden (Tamborini, 2011; Tamborini et al., 2013). Dies leuchtet beispielsweise dadurch ein, dass die negativen Emotionen wie Traurigkeit oder Wut, die dadurch zustande kommen, dass der/die ProtagonistIn, mit dem/der man empathisch mitfühlt, Negatives widerfährt oder er/sie sogar stirbt, als mit eigenen zentralen Werten vereinbar angesehen werden (s. Studie I). Eine weitere Parallele findet sich im Gefühl der *Elevation*, eine emotionale Reaktion „to witnessing acts of virtue and moral beauty“ (Algoe & Haidt, 2009, S. 106). Filme können letztlich nicht nur dadurch, dass sie Werte enthalten, die der/die jeweilige RezipientIn teilt, eine Aktivierung zentraler Werte zur Folge haben, sondern auch dadurch, dass Werte, die der/die RezipientIn nicht teilt, gezeigt werden (vgl. (Tamborini, R., 2013, 2013, 2013). Letzteres kann ebenfalls zur Aktivierung zentraler Werte führen, so dass sich das jeweilige Individuum in seinem eigenen Wertesystem bestärkt fühlen kann.

## **Kompetenz/Persönliches Wachstum**

Im Rahmen der Well-Being Forschung werden Aktivitäten, bei denen ein Individuum sein persönliches Potential voll entfalten kann und seine persönlichen (emotionalen und kognitiven) Fähigkeiten durch Herausforderungen verbessern kann. Ein bedeutungsvoller Film enthält oft negative belastende, aber auch Momente komplexer Valenz und kann daher als emotionale Herausforderung angesehen werden. Sich dieser Herausforderung zu stellen,

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<sup>15</sup> Ein in der Kommunikationswissenschaft und der Medienpsychologie verwandtes Konzept stellt die Parasoziale Interaktion dar (Schramm, 2008).

kann den/die Rezipienten/in sich selbst als kompetent erleben und emotional und kognitiv wachsen lassen.

### **Lebenssinn/Selbstakzeptanz**

Gerade bei der Rezeption bedeutungsvoller Filme kann einem bewusst werden, dass das eigene Leben einen Sinn hat, bzw. können einem die gezeigten Ereignisse aufzeigen, das bisherige Leben sinn- und wertvoll gewesen ist, was letztlich zu einer positiven Selbsteinschätzung führen kann. Auch vor dem theoretischen Hintergrund sozialer Vergleichsprozesse macht diese Interpretation Sinn (Knobloch-Westerwick et al., 2012; Mares & Cantor, 1992).

### **Autonomie**

Im Rahmen der SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2001) wird Handeln dann als autonom erlebt, wenn es volitional und frei von äusseren Zwängen ist: „When activities are done for interest or personal value, perceived autonomy is high“ (S. 349). Bei der Übertragung, bzw. Adaption dieser Dimension eudaimonischen Wohlbefindens auf Medienrezeptionssituationen muss allerdings eine Anpassung vorgenommen werden: Autonomie als Dimension eudaimonischen Unterhaltungserlebens meint ein Gefühl, das eigene Leben im Vergleich zum oft tragischen Leben eines/r Protagonisten/in in autonomer Weise, d.h. frei von Zwängen oder widrigen Umständen führen zu können.

## **Studie III: Eudaimonic Entertainment Experiences**

Studie III widmete sich der theoretischen Entwicklung und empirischen Validierung eudaimonischen Unterhaltungserlebens. Studie III.1 folgte einem einfaktoriellen Experimentaldesign. Wie bei Studie I wurde das Ende eines Films (*Hotel Rwanda*, USA, 2004, Terry George) manipuliert, dies aus folgendem Grund: Letztlich sollte eine Unterhaltungskonzeption vorliegen, die nicht mit den Schwächen bisheriger prozessorientierter Ansätze wie der Affective-Disposition-Theory oder der Excitation-Transfer-Theory behaftet ist. Eudaimonisches Unterhaltungserleben sollte sich nicht zwischen den beiden Ausprägungen des Moderators Ende unterscheiden. Zudem wurde argumentiert, dass bedeutsame Medieninhalte sich nicht das Ende, sondern der Verlauf massgebliches Merkmal für die Bedeutsamkeit eines Medieninhalts sind. Das Ende sollte sich hingegen auf hedonistisches Unterhaltungserleben auswirken. Diese Annahmen trafen in Studie III.1 auch zu: das Ende wirkte sich auf hedonistisches, nicht aber auf eudaimonisches Unterhaltungserleben aus.

Die Struktur eudaimonischen Unterhaltungserlebens konnte mit einer konfirmatorischen Faktoranalyse bestätigt werden. Das Modell eudaimonischen

Unterhaltungserlebens erwies sich auch in Studie III.2 als valide. Hier wurde den ProbandInnen ein nicht-manipulierter Film (*La Vita è Bella*, Italien, 1997, Regie: Roberto Benigni) gezeigt.

Die beiden Studien (Studie III.1 und III.2) lieferten sowohl konvergente als auch diskriminante Validität (Campbell & Fiske, 1959) für die Existenz eudaimonischen Unterhaltungserlebens. Konvergente Validität wurde durch eine positive Korrelation zwischen der erlebten Traurigkeit und den Dimensionen eudaimonischen Unterhaltungserlebens demonstriert. Oben wurde argumentiert, dass eudaimonisches Unterhaltungserleben mit dem Erleben starker negativer Emotionen einhergehen kann, deren Meisterung zu einem Gefühl der Kompetenz führen kann. Des Weiteren kann die erlebte Traurigkeit auch als mit Werten kompatibel angesehen werden, wie Studie I bezüglich eines Mediators gezeigt hat. Auch ein Gefühl der Verbundenheit mit einem Protagonisten kann mit Traurigkeit einhergehen. Entsprechend korrelierten vier der fünf<sup>16</sup> Dimensionen eudaimonischen Unterhaltungserlebens mit erlebter Traurigkeit. Nun wurde aber oben argumentiert, dass Medieninhalte nicht aufgrund ihrer traurigkeitsauslösenden Wirkung, sondern aufgrund ihrer durch sie erlebten Bedeutsamkeit, die sich auf emotionaler Ebene in eher komplexeren emotionalen Zuständen äussern kann (Ersner-Hershfield, Mikels, Sullivan, & Carstensen, 2008; Larsen, McGraw, & Cacioppo, 2001; Oliver, 2008), charakterisiert werden sollten. Es stellt sich daher die Frage, in welcher Beziehung eudaimonisches Unterhaltungserleben mit sog. *gemischten Emotionen* (engl. mixed emotions), also mit gleichzeitig auftretenden negativen und positiven Emotionen<sup>17</sup> in Verbindung steht, die näher am Konzept der Bedeutsamkeit liegen als negative Emotionen (vgl. auch die *tender affective states* bei Oliver, 2008). Oliver und Hartmann (2010) konnten zeigen, dass zwar Traurigkeit bei bedeutsamen Filmen stärker ausgeprägt war als bei hedonistischen Filmen, gemischte Emotionen waren aber bei bedeutsamen Filmen bedeutend stärker ausgeprägt als die Traurigkeit. Auch im Hinblick darauf, dass es sich bei eudaimonischem Unterhaltungserleben – sowohl theoretische-konzeptionell als auch bezüglich der Operationalisierung – immer auch um ein *positives Rezeptionserleben* handelt, bei dem aber immer auch negative Informationen und damit negativer Affekt integriert werden muss, scheint diese Überlegung sinnvoll (vgl. Wirth et al., 2012).

Diskriminante Validität wurde, wie oben erwähnt, dadurch gezeigt, dass sich der Moderator Ende (negativ vs. positiv) des Films *Hotel Rwanda* (USA, 2004, Terry George) auf

<sup>16</sup> Autonomie korrelierte nicht signifikant mit Traurigkeit. Dennoch war die Korrelation positiv; der Koeffizient lag bei .14.

<sup>17</sup> Vor einem appraisaltheoretischen Hintergrund ist eine solche Gleichzeitigkeit nicht vorgesehen. Gemischte Emotionen dürften sich eher in einem sehr schnellen aber immer noch sequentiellen Abwechseln zwischen positivem und negativem Affekt äussern.

keine der Dimensionen eudaimonischen Unterhaltungserlebens, wohl aber auf hedonistisches Unterhaltungserleben auswirkte. Offenbar hat das Filmende keinen Einfluss auf eudaimonisches Unterhaltungserleben. Eine weitere Frage, die sich daher stellt, ist, welche Moderatoren diese Form des Unterhaltungserlebens begünstigen oder hemmen.

Diesen Fragen geht die vierte Studie (Studie IV) nach, indem sie nicht bei Medieninhalts-, sondern Rezipientenmerkmalen ansetzt und nicht nur negative Emotionen als Korrelate eudaimonischen Unterhaltungserlebens betrachtet.

#### **Alter als Moderator eudaimonischen Unterhaltungserlebens**

Ein plausibler Moderator, der eudaimonisches Unterhaltungserleben begünstigen dürfte, ist das Alter. Ältere Menschen stehen verstärkt vor der Aufgabe, mit Verlusten innerhalb ihres sozialen Netzwerks, aber auch mit Einbussen im sensorisches Vermögen oder in der Agilität umgehen zu müssen (Caplan, Haslett, & Burleson, 2005). Dennoch ist zu beobachten, dass ältere Menschen nicht weniger positive Emotionen und nicht mehr negative Emotionen, sondern emotional ausgeglichener sind als jüngere Menschen (Carstensen et al., 1999). Die *Socioemotional Selectivity Theory* (Carstensen, Isaacowitz, & Charles, 1999; Carstensen et al., 2003; 2010) postuliert, dass mit dem Älterwerden und der damit verbundenen Wahrnehmung der Endlichkeit der eigenen Lebenszeit die Motivation für emotional bedeutungsvolle Aktivitäten und Erlebnisse, bzw. das Bedürfnis nach Bedeutungshaftigkeit zunimmt (Carstensen et al., 2003). Neben diesem erhöhten Bedürfnis nach emotional bedeutungsvollen Erlebnissen und Aktivitäten weisen ältere Menschen im Vergleich zu jüngeren Menschen eine ausgeprägtere emotionale Komplexität auf, da sie schon längere Zeit sowohl positive als auch negative Erlebnisse in ihr Leben integrieren mussten (Charles, 2005). Jüngere Menschen streben eher danach, ihr Wissen und ihren Horizont zu erweitern, um letztlich ihr zukünftiges Leben planen zu können. Dazu gehört auch das Erleben ausgeprägter negativer oder positiver Emotionen und mitunter gar risikoreicheres Verhalten (Arnett, 2000, 2007). Auch stehen jüngere Menschen vor der Aufgabe, ihre Identität mit Blick in die Zukunft auszubilden, während ältere Menschen rückblickend ihrem Leben einen Sinn geben müssen, um dadurch letztlich der nahenden und unendlich komplexen und damit bedrohlichen Situation ihres nahenden Todes fertig werden zu können (Carstensen et al., 1999; Carstensen et al., 2003; Charles & Carstensen, 2004; Charles & Carstensen, 2010). Ältere Menschen sind daher daran interessiert, Sinnhaftigkeit und Bedeutung in ihrer noch verbleibenden Zeit zu erleben (Carstensen et al., 2003).

Entsprechend ihrem Streben nach Bedeutsamkeit bevorzugen ältere Menschen bedeutungsvolle Medieninhalte und mögen beispielsweise Horrorfilme oder Komödien eher

weniger, weil diese Bedürfnissen nach Bedeutsamkeit nicht oder nur schwer nachkommen können (Bartsch, 2012a; Mares, Oliver, & Cantor, 2008; van der Goot, Beentjes, & van Selm, 2012). Wie oben bereits erwähnt gehen Präferenzen meist konkrete Rezeptionserlebnisse und damit Prozesse voraus (Slater, 2007)<sup>18</sup>. Diese Prozesse, die in unterschiedlichen Altersgruppen während oder unmittelbar nach der Rezeption solcher Medieninhalte ablaufen, wurden bisher nicht oder nur unzureichend und vor allem nicht mit Blick auf eudaimonische Formen des Unterhaltungserlebens untersucht.

### **Altersunterschiede in eudaimonischem Unterhaltungserleben**

Ältere Menschen streben vermehrt nach bedeutungsvollen sozialen Beziehungen (Charles & Carstensen, 2004). Des Weiteren fanden Richter und Kunzmann (2011), dass ältere Menschen sich stärker um die Mitglieder ihrer sozialen Netzwerke sorgen als jüngere Menschen. Daher kann angenommen werden, dass ältere Menschen auch bei der Rezeption bedeutsamer Medieninhalte stärkere Gefühle der Verbundenheit mit den jeweiligen Charakteren empfinden als jüngere Menschen.

Bezüglich der Aktivierung zentraler Werte kann vor dem Hintergrund von Forschungen zu fluider und kristalliner Intelligenz (z.B., Lindenberger, Mayr, & Kliegl, 1993), die gezeigt haben, dass ältere Menschen über ein höheres Ausmass an kristalliner Intelligenz (i.e., die im Verlaufe des Lebens angeeigneten Wissensstrukturen) verfügen als jüngere, argumentiert werden, dass sich auch das Wertesystem einer älteren Person im Verlaufe ihres Lebens gefestigt hat. Gleichzeitig geht die *Moral Evaluation Theory* (Haidt & Joseph, 2008; Tamborini, 2011) von angeborenen synaptischen Verbindungen, sog. *Moral Modules* aus, die sich im Verlaufe des Lebens ausbilden und mit denen wertbezogene Urteile gefällt werden. Diese Moral Modules werden bei der Rezeption von Medieninhalten, die entsprechende Werte darstellen, aktiviert. Die Tatsache, dass auf gefestigtere Gehirnstrukturen auch besser aktiviert werden können, lässt den Schluss zu, dass ältere Menschen bei der Rezeption eines bedeutsamen Medieninhalts, bei dem der/die jeweilige ProtagonistIn sich entsprechend moralischer Werte verhält, diese Dimension eudaimonischen Unterhaltungserlebens stärker erleben als jüngere Menschen.

Ältere Menschen erleben durch körperliche oder kognitive Defizite vermehrt Einbussen im Kompetenzerleben (Ryff, 1989b). Ein bedeutsamer Film, der RezipientInnen mitunter vor emotionale Herausforderungen stellt, kann Kompetenz auf einfachere Art und Weise erleben lassen als Alltagssituationen. Daher kann angenommen werden, dass ältere Menschen ein höheres Ausmass an Kompetenz erleben, wenn sie sich einen bedeutsamen

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<sup>18</sup> Präferenzen beeinflussen schliesslich wieder Rezeptionsprozesse (bzw. Wirkungen der Rezeption). Slater (2007) spricht von sog. *Reinforcing Spirals*.

Film anschauen. Auf gleiche Art und Weise lässt sich mit der vierten Dimension eudaimonischen Unterhaltungserleben – Autonomie – argumentieren.

Auch bezüglich Lebenssinn und Selbstakzeptanz, der fünften Dimension eudaimonischen Unterhaltungserlebens, lassen sich Altersunterschiede annehmen. Zum einen zeigen Forschungsergebnisse vor dem Hintergrund der SST, dass ältere Menschen in höherem Masse Sinnhaftigkeit und Bedeutsamkeit in ihrem Leben suchen (Charles & Carstensen, 2010); zum anderen neigen ältere Menschen in höherem Masse dazu, auf positive Aspekte ihres Lebens zu achten und damit auch sich selbst besser zu akzeptieren als jüngere Menschen. Man spricht hier von der sog. *Positivity Bias* (Mather & Carstensen, 2005). Daher ist es plausibel anzunehmen, dass ältere Menschen auch diese Dimension eudaimonischen Unterhaltungserlebens in höherem Ausmass erleben als jüngere.

#### **Studie IV: Age Differences in Non-Hedonic Entertainment Experiences**

Studie IV (Hofer, Allemand, & Martin, accepted) untersucht daher Altersunterschiede im eudaimonischen Unterhaltungserleben. In einem zwei-faktoriellen Experimentaldesign (Faktor 1: jüngere vs. ältere Probanden; Faktor II: positives vs. negatives Filmende) konnte gezeigt, dass ältere Menschen bei der Rezeption des Films *Dancer in the Dark* (USA, 2000, Regie: Lars von Trier) in der Tat ein höheres Ausmass an eudaimonischem Unterhaltungserleben verspürten als jüngere und zwar auf allen Dimensionen. Zudem zeigen die Resultate eine positive Korrelation zwischen den Dimensionen eudaimonischen Unterhaltungserlebens und gemischten Emotionen<sup>19</sup> - allerdings nur in der Gruppe der älteren ProbandInnen. In dieser Gruppe korrelierten die fünf Dimensionen eudaimonischen Unterhaltungserlebens auch mit positiven Emotionen; damit wird zudem deutlich, dass eudaimonisches Unterhaltungserleben letztlich als positives Rezeptionserleben konzipiert werden muss. Das Filmende hatte keine Auswirkungen und es fanden sich auch keine Interaktionseffekte zwischen dem Alter und dem Filmende.

#### **Mehrwert und Implikationen der Studie**

Die Studie erweitert die auf motivations- und selektionstheoretischen Überlegungen basierenden Erkenntnisse (Bartsch, 2012a, 2012b; Mares et al., 2008), indem sie aufzeigt, dass sich auch Prozesse während der Rezeption zwischen älteren und jüngeren Menschen unterscheiden können. Bedeutungsvolle Filme können damit insbesondere für ältere Menschen eine wichtige adaptive Funktion übernehmen, zumal ältere Menschen sich aufgrund vermehrter körperlicher und mitunter kognitiver Defizite immer weniger beanspruchenden ausserhäuslicher Tätigkeiten widmen können. Bedeutungsvolle Filme

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<sup>19</sup> Zur Definition und Operationalisierung vgl. Ersner-Hershfield, Mikels, Sullivan, and Carstensen (2008).

können hier letztlich auch eine kompensatorische Wirkung haben, indem sie älteren Menschen ein gewisses Autonomie- und Kompetenzerleben ermöglichen, ihnen aber auch zentrale Werte vermitteln, denen sie zustimmen oder die sie ablehnen können, was letztlich ihr eigenes Wertesystem weiter stärken, bzw. bestätigen dürfte. Zusätzlich können solche Medieninhalte älteren Menschen helfen, ihr eigenes Leben besser zu akzeptieren, was letztlich eine stabilisierende und eine die psychische Gesundheit fördernde Wirkung haben kann. Letztlich können Filme, die Menschen ein Gefühl der Bedeutsamkeit und Sinnhaftigkeit vermitteln, einen wichtigen Beitrag zum erfolgreichen Altern (engl. successful aging, Wong, 1989) leisten.

### **Schlussfolgerungen und Ausblick**

Ausgehend vom Anspruch, eine Erklärung für das Sad Film Paradoxon zu finden, hat die vorliegende kumulative Dissertation empirische Evidenz dafür geliefert, dass Filme nicht nur blosses Vergnügen (im Sinne hedonistischen Unterhaltungserlebens) auslösen können, sondern auch zentrale Werte aktivieren können. Diese Aktivierung von Werten kann sowohl in Form von hedonistisches Unterhaltungserleben begünstigenden Mediatorprozessen als auch als Teil eudaimonischen Unterhaltungserlebens zutage treten. Des Weiteren können Filme Rezipienten über den Sinn ihres eigenen Lebens und des Lebens an sich reflektieren und sie damit ihre Sterblichkeit besser akzeptieren lassen. Auch Gefühle der Kompetenz, der Autonomie und der Verbundenheit können gefördert werden (Studie III), die, wie Studie IV gezeigt hat, besonders bei älteren Menschen ausgeprägt auftreten.

Damit wurde nicht nur der Unterhaltungsbegriff, sondern auch das Verständnis von dieses Unterhaltungserleben auslösenden Medieninhalten aus einer rezeptionsorientierten Perspektive erweitert.

Es lassen sich nun verschiedenen Implikationen der vorliegenden Forschungsergebnisse ausmachen, auf die im Folgenden eingegangen wird. Dabei wird zunächst der Frage nach einem weiteren möglichen Moderator eudaimonischen Unterhaltungserlebens nachgegangen. Darauf folgen Überlegungen darüber, welche Funktionen eudaimonisches Unterhaltungserleben, bzw. Medienangebote, die ein solches Erleben begünstigen, auf individueller und auf Aggregatsebene haben können.

### **Fiktionalität vs. Faktualität**

Die vorliegenden vier dissertationsrelevanten Studien wurden alle mit fiktionalen Filmen als Stimuli durchgeführt. Nun ist es höchst plausibel, anzunehmen, dass nicht nur fiktionale Spielfilme, sondern jegliche Arten von Medieninhalten (also zum Beispiel auch Nachrichten oder Dokumentationen) in der Lage sind, eudaimonische Gratifikationen



auszulösen. Wie die vier dissertationsrelevanten Studien gezeigt haben, besteht eudaimonisches Unterhaltungserleben auch darin, Bezüge zum eigenen Leben, bzw. zum Leben an sich herzustellen. Daher dürften insbesondere Medieninhalte, die nicht fiktionale, sondern *wahre* (i.e., *faktuale*) *Begebenheiten* darstellen, in besonders hohem Masse in der Lage sein, eudaimonisches Unterhaltungserleben auszulösen, da davon auszugehen ist, dass die Bezüge zur eigenen Person bei faktualen Medieninhalten in stärkerem Masse hergestellt werden können als bei fiktionalen. Ein Exkurs in die Perceived Reality-Forschung scheint für ein vertiefteres Verständnis angebracht.

### **Perceived Reality**

Die forschungsgeschichtlich älteste Dimension wahrgenommener Realität ist die *Faktualität* (engl. factuality). Diese Dimension bezieht sich auf medial dargestellte Sachverhalte und Ereignisse, die sich tatsächlich ereignet haben und damit letztlich auf die Unterscheidung Realität vs. Fiktion (Hall, 2003(Rothmund, Schreier, & Groeben, 2001a, 2001b).

Es finden sich sowohl in medien- als auch in neuropsychologischen Forschungen Hinweise auf die Akkuratheit der Annahme, dass es sich bei Fiktionalität vs. Faktualität um einen moderierenden Faktor bei der Entstehung eudaimonischen Unterhaltungserlebens handeln kann. Konijn und Hoorn (2005), beispielsweise, zeigten, dass realistische und gleichzeitig moralisch handelnde („gute“) Charaktere (z.B., Gandhi) zu stärkerem Involvement, schwächerer Distanz und zu stärkerer *wahrgenommener Relevanz* führten als fiktionale Charaktere (z.B., Superman). In fMRI-Studien konnte ferner gezeigt werden, dass reale (im Unterschied zu fiktionalen) Stimuli zu einer stärkeren Aktivierung des anterioren medialen präfrontalen Cortex und des posterioren cingulären Cortex führt (Abraham & von Cramon, 2009; Abraham, von Cramon, & Schubotz, 2008). Diese Gehirnregionen werden in der Regel mit episodischem Gedächtnis und selbst-referenziellem Denken (z.B., autobiographische Erinnerungen) in Verbindung gebracht. Analog zu den Ergebnissen von Konijn und Hoorn (2005) konnten Abraham und von Cramon (2009) nachweisen, dass die Verarbeitung realer Personen mit einer höheren persönlichen Relevanz einhergeht als die Verarbeitung fiktionaler Personen. Es ist plausibel anzunehmen, dass die Bedeutsamkeit im Sinne eudaimonischen Unterhaltungserlebens und damit die persönliche Relevanz von Filmen stärker zum Tragen kommt, wenn der Film als Tatsachenbericht (im Gegensatz zu einer Fiktion) eingeführt wird.

Erste empirische Evidenz bezüglich des Einflusses der Faktualität/Fiktionalität auf eudaimonisches Unterhaltungserleben findet sich bei einem Vergleich<sup>20</sup> der verschiedenen Eudaimonik-Dimensionen über drei verschiedene Filme, die in Studie I, III und IV als Stimuli dienten: *Dancer in the Dark* (USA, 2000, Regie: Lars von Trier), *Hotel Rwanda* (USA, 2004, Regie: Terry Georg) und *La Vita è Bella* (Italien, 1997, Regie: Roberto Benigni). Es ist plausibel anzunehmen, dass sich die Filme bezüglich ihres Realitätsgrades unterscheiden. Während *Hotel Rwanda* auf den Geschehnissen während des Genozids in Ruanda und auf dem Nazi-Terror des letzten Jahrhunderts basieren, handelt es sich bei *Dancer in the Dark* zwar um eine fiktionale Erzählung, deren Handlungsverlauf eher untypisch und wenig repräsentativ (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974) ist. Die drei Filme unterscheiden sich signifikant bezüglich der Dimensionen Aktivierung zentraler Werte ( $F(2, 381) = 19.043, p < .001, \eta^2 = .09$ ), Lebenssinn/Selbstakzeptanz ( $F(2, 381) = 3.435, p < .001, \eta^2 = .02$ ), Kompetenz/persönliches Wachstum ( $F(2, 381) = 10.414, p < .001, \eta^2 = .05$ ) und Autonomie ( $F(2, 381) = 8.996, p < .001, \eta^2 = .05$ ). Bezüglich Verbundenheit fand sich kein signifikanter Unterschied zwischen den drei Filmen. Ein Post-Hoc Scheffé-Test ergab, dass sich die Mittelwerte besagter Dimensionen zwischen *Hotel Rwanda* und *La Vita è Bella* nicht unterscheiden; hingegen unterschieden sich die Werte von *Dancer in the Dark* von denen der beiden anderen Filme.

Perceived Reality wird heute als mehrdimensionales Konstrukt betrachtet (Hall, 2003; Rothmund, et al. 2001a). Nach einer Durchsicht der Perceived Reality-Forschungen nennen Busselle und Greenberg (2000) sechs verschiedene Dimensionen, nach denen die wahrgenommene Realität durch den Rezipienten eingeschätzt werden kann. *Magic Window*, *Social Realism*, *Plausibility*, *Probability*, *Identity* und *Utility*. In Fokusgruppeninterviews fand Hall (2003) die Dimensionen *Plausibility* (i.e., die Glaubwürdigkeit dessen, dass sich das Gezeigte wirklich so ereignet), *Typicality/Representativeness* (i.e., das Ausmass, zu dem das Dargestellte Ereignisse in der realen Welt widerspiegelt, vgl. auch Shapiro & Chock, 2003), *Perceptive Persuasiveness* (i.e., der Grad, in dem der Text eine überzeugende Illusion erzeugt), *Narrative Consistency* (i.e., die Überzeugung, dass, obwohl sich etwas nicht in dieser Art zutragen kann, es sich trotzdem um eine konsistente Erzählung handelt) und *Involvement* (i.e., das Ausmass der emotionalen Beteiligung der Rezipienten) angesprochen ist.

Schliesslich lässt sich auch argumentieren, dass nicht die dichotome Unterscheidung zwischen Fiktionalität und Faktualität, sondern der *Grad* der Realitätsnähe entlang

<sup>20</sup> Ein solcher filmübergreifender Vergleich steht hinsichtlich der internen Validität auf tönernen Füßen und muss daher mit äusserster Vorsicht betrachtet werden, zumal nicht einmal der wahrgenommene Realitätsgrad gemessen wurde.

verschiedener Dimensionen wahrgenommener Realität sich auf eudaimonisches Unterhaltungserleben auswirken kann. So könnte sich, um ein Beispiel zu nennen, der Grad an wahrgenommenem *Social Realism* auf die Verbundenheit mit einem oder mehreren Charakteren auswirken.

### **Eudaimonisches Unterhaltungserleben als Emotionsregulation**

Die in Studie I bis IV beschriebenen Rezeptionsprozesse können auch als Formen der *Emotionsregulation* nach Gross (z.B., 1998) betrachtet werden. Gross (1998) unterscheidet zwischen zwei Arten der Emotionsregulation: *Antezedenz-fokussierte* (engl. antecedent-focused) und *reaktions-fokussierte* (engl. response-focused). Erstere reguliert gewissermassen, das Input-System und letztere den Ausdruck von Emotionen, also das Output-System. Gross (1998) trifft bezüglich beider Strategien noch feinere Unterscheidungen. So lässt sich antezedenz-fokussierte Emotionsregulation unterteilen in (1) *Wahl der Situation* (engl. situation selection), (2) *Situationsmodifikation* (engl. situation modification), (3) *Aufmerksamkeit gegenüber verschiedenen Aspekten der Situation* (engl. attentional deployment), (4) *Uminterpretation* (engl. cognitive change); damit ist gemeint, dass man auf die eine oder andere Weise über eine Situation nachdenken und damit ihre emotionale Signifikanz ändern kann. Reaktions-fokussierte Emotionsregulation umfasst alle Strategien, Emotionen beizubehalten, zu verlängern oder zu verkürzen.

Die in Studie I untersuchten Metaappraisalprozesse wandeln negative Emotionen (i.e., Traurigkeit) in eine positive Metaemotion (i.e., Unterhaltungserleben) um. Dieser Prozess könnte letztlich als Form der reaktions-fokussierte Emotionsregulation betrachtet werden. Wirth und Schramm (2007a; 2007b) betrachten Metaappraisals aber als eine mögliche Form von *Reappraisals*, die nach Gross (1998) zur antezedenz-fokussierten Emotionsregulation gehört. Führt man sich vor Augen, dass Metaappraisals nicht nur die jeweilige Emotion, sondern immer die Emotion vor dem Hintergrund des jeweiligen Medieninhalts zum Gegenstand haben (i.e., „Traurigkeit *bei diesem Film* ist normverträglich.“), scheint diese Interpretation sinnvoll.

In Studie II konnte gezeigt werden, dass ein bedeutsamer Film offenbar dazu dienen kann, mit der Unvermeidbarkeit des Todes, bzw. der Angst davor, umgehen zu können. Damit kann auch Appreciation als eine Form der antezedenz-fokussierten Emotionsregulation betrachtet werden. Konkret kann Appreciation als Form eines Attentional Deployments betrachtet werden, da die Aufmerksamkeit auf andere Aspekte des Lebens als dessen Vergänglichkeit gelenkt wird.

Schliesslich können auch die fünf Dimensionen eudaimonischen Unterhaltungserleben als antezedenz-fokussierte Emotionsregulation betrachtet werden, da auch hier die Aufmerksamkeit auf andere Aspekte der Situation, bzw. des Stimulus als deren/dessen Tragik gelenkt wird: auf die Verbundenheit mit dem jeweiligen Charakter, auf die erlebte Kompetenz und das persönliche Wachstum, auf die Autonomie und den Sinn im eigenen Leben und schliesslich auch auf die zentralen Werte.

Neben dieser eher kurzfristigen Implikation lassen sich auch längerfristige ausmachen. Diese sind Gegenstand der nachfolgenden Betrachtungen.

### **Bedeutsame Medieninhalte und Identität**

Vor dem Hintergrund des Uses and Gratifications-Ansatzes hat bereits (Blumler, 1979) argumentiert, dass Menschen Medien auch aus einem Bedürfnis nach persönlicher Identitätsbildung (engl. personal identity) heraus nutzen. Tesser, Millar und Wu (1988) fanden, dass RezipientInnen eine wichtige Funktion von Filmen darin sahen, sie bei ihrer Selbstentwicklung (engl. self-development) zu unterstützen. Ähnlich konnten auch Suckfüll und Scharkow (2009) zeigen, dass RezipientInnen bei der Rezeption eines Medieninhalts auch Identitätsarbeit verrichten können, indem sie das Gesehene mit ihrem eigenen Leben in Beziehung setzen. Analog fanden Oliver und Hartmann (2010), dass Meaningful Cinematic Experiences dann erlebt werden, wenn RezipientInnen eine Verbindung zwischen dem Gesehenen und ihrem eigenen Leben herstellen können und wenn die Filme ihnen zeigen, dass das Leben vergänglich ist und es deswegen besonders geschätzt werden sollte. Wie Studie II gezeigt hat, tritt Appreciation besonders dann auf, wenn RezipientInnen durch Mortalitätssalienz gewissermassen „gezwungen“ werden nach einem tieferen Sinn zu suchen und wenn sie dazu noch eine generelle Neigung haben, nach einem Sinn im Leben zu suchen. Studie III hat sich schliesslich der inhaltlichen Ausgestaltung dieser wahrgenommenen Sinnhaftigkeit und Bedeutsamkeit angenommen und in Studie IV zeigte sich, dass ältere Menschen, die in hohem Masse Sinnhaftigkeit und Bedeutsamkeit in ihrem Leben suchen, stärker eudaimonisch unterhalten waren als jüngere Menschen.

Eine solche Suche nach Sinnhaftigkeit und Bedeutsamkeit wird nicht nur bei Mortalitätssalienz, in hohem Alter oder bei tragischen oder traumatischen Erlebnissen ausgelöst (Bauer & McAdams, 2010; Frankl, 1985; Maslow, 1964; Park & Folkman, 1997). Vielmehr scheint es ein generelles Bedürfnis von Menschen zu sein, Bedeutsamkeit und Sinnhaftigkeit in ihrem Leben zu finden (Maddi, 1970; Wong, 1989), um letztlich *Fragen nach der eigenen Identität* beantworten, bzw. an der eigenen Identität arbeiten zu können. Bauer, McAdams und Pals (2008) sprechen von sog. *Narrativer Identität*: “Narrative identity

refers to the internal, dynamic life story that an individual constructs to make sense of his or her life" (S. 81). Dabei nimmt die individuelle Identität die Form einer Geschichte mit einem bestimmten Plot, mit bestimmten Szenen und Charakteren an (Bauer et al., 2008; McAdams, 2001) an: „Life stories, like stories generally, make use of characters, plots, tones, and other narrative elements to convey meaning“ (Bauer et al., 2008, S. 85). Die Funktion einer solchen Lebensgeschichte besteht aus der Integration vergangener und gegenwärtiger und mitunter auch zukünftiger Aspekte der eigenen Person in ein kohärentes Ganzes, eine kohärente Persönlichkeit, die schliesslich das Wohlbefinden der einzelnen Person zu sichern vermag: “[...] the process of constructing, revising, and living in accordance with this narrative over time are central to personality functioning, development, and well-being” (Pals, 2006, S. 1080). Im Sinne einer stabilen und damit funktionalen Identitätskonstruktion ist es dabei von eminenter Wichtigkeit, sowohl negative, als auch positive Aspekte des eigenen Lebens, der eigenen Fähigkeiten und Werte in eine stimmige Lebensgeschichte zu integrieren: „[...] to answer the question ‚Who am I?‘ one must integrate one’s disparate roles, incorporate one’s values and skills, and organize the past, present, and future into a meaningful pattern“ (Baumeister & Wilson, 1996, S. 322). Während jüngere Menschen sich am Anfang ihrer Identitätskonstruktion befinden, stehen ältere Menschen vor der Aufgabe, ihrem Leben rückblickend einen Sinn zu geben und es als bedeutungsvoll anzusehen. Dabei müssen sowohl positive als auch negative und mitunter gar traumatische Ergebnisse integriert werden (Erikson, 1980)<sup>21</sup>. Im Laufe der Bildung ihrer narrativen Identität konstruieren Menschen sog. *Imagos*. Diese sind nach McAdams (2001) die Protagonisten der eigenen Lebensgeschichte. Ein Imago ist definiert als „an idealized personification of the self that functions as a protagonist of the narrative“ (S. 106).

Baumeister und Wilson (1996) vertreten nun die Ansicht, dass eine narrative Identität dadurch konstruiert wird, indem vier (bzw. fünf) basale Bedürfnisse nach Bedeutsamkeit (engl. needs for meaning) befriedigt werden (s. auch Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Baumeister & Vohs, 2002). Das erste Bedürfnis nennen die Autoren das *Bedürfnis nach einem Zweck* (engl. need for purpose). Damit ist gemeint, dass jedes Ereignis einen Grund haben, bzw. einem Zweck dienen soll. Zweck kann dabei in zwei Arten eingeteilt werden: Mit der ersten sind Ziele, also ein objektiv feststellbares Eintreffen verschiedener Situationen angesprochen. Die zweite, eher subjektive Art von Zweck liegt in der Erfüllung (z.B., in der Liebe oder im Beruf) (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002). Eine deutliche Parallele ist bei der Dimension *Purpose in Life* eudaimonischen Wohlbefindens bei Ryff (1998) zu finden. Das zweite Bedürfnis ist *das*

<sup>21</sup> Erikson (1980) spricht in diesem Zusammenhang von *Ego Integrity*.

*Bedürfnis nach Werten* (engl. need for values). Diese Werte können Menschen einen Leitfaden an die Hand geben, wie sie ihr Leben in einer guten Art und Weise führen können oder welche Handlungen gut und richtig sind (Besley, 2008; Blanchard-Fields, Hertzog, Stein, & Pak, 2001). Das dritte Bedürfnis ist das *Bedürfnis nach Wirksamkeit* (engl. need for efficacy). Damit ist gemeint, dass Menschen den Wunsch hegen, aktiv in die Welt einzugreifen. Baumeister und Vohs (2002) weisen darauf hin, dass das Vorhandensein von Wertvorstellungen allein nicht ausreicht; vielmehr soll nach diesen Wertvorstellungen in autonomer und kompetenter Weise in der Welt gehandelt werden. Es zeigt sich eine deutliche Parallele zu den im Rahmen der SDT postulierten Bedürfnissen nach Autonomie und Kompetenz (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Das vierte Bedürfnis geht mit den anderen beiden einher oder ist soz. eine Folge der beiden vorhergegangenen: das *Bedürfnis nach Selbst-Wert* (engl. need for self-worth). Dieses Bedürfnis kann beispielsweise im Bewusstsein befriedigt werden, man sei besser als andere – letztlich in einem sozialen Abwärtsvergleich (Festinger, 1954). Es kann aber auch dadurch Befriedigung finden, dass man ein Leben nach den eigenen Werten und Normen führt. Hier findet sich eine deutliche Parallele zum oben erwähnten Anxiety-Buffer Selbstwertgefühl (i.e., das Bewusstsein, man selbst lebe nach kulturell gewachsenen internalisierten Werten) im Rahmen der TMT, aber auch zur Dimension *Self-Acceptance* bei Ryff (1998). Schliesslich nennen Baumeister und Leary (1995) zusätzlich ein fünftes basales Bedürfnis: das *Bedürfnis nach interpersonaler Verbundenheit* (engl. the need to belong), also das Bedürfnis nach. Dieses Bedürfnis nach Verbundenheit wird auch im Rahmen der SDT als basales Bedürfnis aufgeführt (allerdings hier mit dem englischen Begriff *relatedness*) und – wie Autonomie und Kompetenz – als Teil eudaimonischen Wohlbefindens betrachtet (Ryff, 1989a; Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Ryff & Singer, 2006; Ryff & Singer, 2008).

Es sind also deutliche Parallelen zwischen dem bei Baumeister und Wilson (1996) und Baumeister und Leary (1995) ausgeführten Bedürfniskatalog und den Dimensionen eudaimonischen Wohlbefindens bei Ryff und Kollegen und bei Ryan und Deci (2001) auszumachen. Bauer et al. (2008) merken zusammenfassend an, dass eudaimonisches Wohlbefinden mit der Einschätzung einhergeht „that one feels good while explicitly considering one’s sense of meaningfulness in life“ (S. 83).

Bedeutsame Filme sind ebenfalls Narrationen. Es sind Geschichten mit Protagonisten, einem Plot und bestimmten Szenen, die zwar vom ultimativen Ende einer menschlichen Existenz, also vom Tod, erzählen können, aber auch von einem Leben nach gewissen Werten und Normen, die also sowohl negative (Tod, Krankheit etc.) als auch positive Aspekte des Lebens (Werte, Normen, Verbundenheit mit anderen Menschen etc.) enthalten. Diese

Geschichten versorgen den/die Rezipienten/in mit Modellen der Wirklichkeit<sup>22</sup> – man könnte von *Modell-Imagos* sprechen. Dadurch unterstützen sie den/die Rezipienten/in bei der Konstruktion seiner/ihrer Identität. Solche medienvermittelten Narrationen sind dabei besonders attraktiv, denn sie stellen teilweise komplette Lebensgeschichten oder Ausschnitte daraus und damit auch deren positive als auch negative Aspekte in kondensierter und meist auch emotional intensiverer Form dar (Scheele, 1999; Dohle, 2011). Der/die RezipientIn kann damit innerhalb kurzer Zeit (innerhalb der Dauer eines Films) in seiner/ihrer eudaimonisch orientierten Identitätsarbeit Unterstützung finden, was mitunter auch bedeuten kann, dass man in einer komplexeren Art und Weise über sein eigenes Leben nachdenken kann als vor der Rezeption eines Films, beispielsweise dann, wenn sog. *ambige*, also nicht durchgehend gute oder schlechte, bzw. moralisch integre oder moralisch verwerflich handelnde Charaktere (Modell-Imagos) gezeigt werden (Krakowiak & Oliver, 2012). Indem sie eudaimonisches Unterhaltungserleben auslösen und dabei die Bedürfnisse nach Sinnhaftigkeit und Bedeutsamkeit oder eben eudaimonisches Unterhaltungserleben während der Medienrezeption befriedigen, können Medieninhalte RezipientInnen also in ihrer Identitätsarbeit unterstützen.

### **Moralität, Werte und Gruppenidentitäten**

Entlang dieser Überlegungen lässt sich auch auf Aggregatsebene eine gewisse Relevanz der vorliegenden Dissertation ausmachen: „The four [/five, MH] needs for meaning can be used to assess not only the meaning of individual lives but even the meaningfulness throughout a society“ (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002, S. 611). Baumeister und Vohs (2002) gehen davon aus, dass in der heutigen westlichen Gesellschaft vier der fünf basalen Bedürfnisse weitgehend gedeckt werden können: das Bedürfnis nach einem Zweck im Leben wird weitgehend durch ein vielfältiges Angebot an im Beruf zu übernehmenden Aufgaben befriedigt werden. Dem Bedürfnis nach Wirksamkeit oder Kompetenz kann in einer Gesellschaft in ähnlicher Weise Rechnung getragen werden, indem ein Individuum in verschiedenen Domänen (z.B., Hobbies, Familie oder Freiwilligenarbeit) Kompetenz erleben kann. Genauso verhält es sich mit dem Bedürfnis nach Selbst-Wert, indem die Gesellschaft mehr oder minder eindeutige Kriterien und gleichzeitig eine Fülle von Bereichen festlegt, bzw. bietet, mit, bzw. in denen ein Individuum seinen Selbst-Wert bemessen kann. Auch das Bedürfnis nach Verbundenheit (Baumeister & Leary, 1995) kann in einer Gesellschaft befriedigt werden, dadurch, dass gesellschaftliche Institutionen wie die Familie oder Vereine

<sup>22</sup> Zillmann (2002) spricht im Rahmen der *Exemplification Theory* von sog. *Exemplars* und meint damit Einheiten oder Ereignisse, die in den Medien dargestellt werden und die als Beispiele einer grösseren Kategorie dienen. Klimmt (2011) spricht von „comprehensive models of the true complexity of life“ (S. 35).

auch in der heutigen Gesellschaft Bedeutung haben. Wie Studie I- IV gezeigt haben, scheinen bedeutungsvolle Medieninhalte als kulturelle Artefakte und damit wichtige Erzeugnisse des Gesellschaftssystems Medien auch einen wichtigen Beitrag leisten zu können, indem sie Gefühle der Kompetenz, Autonomie, Selbst-Akzeptanz und der Verbundenheit auslösen können, die, wie im letzten Abschnitt gezeigt wurde, letztlich eine identitätsfördernde Wirkung haben. Zusätzlich sind solche Medieninhalte auch in der Lage, bestimmte Werte vermitteln, bzw. aktivieren zu können, die schliesslich auch auf gesellschaftlicher Ebene verankert werden können. Diese Werte bilden allerdings einen Sonderfall: Hier fehlt heute weitgehend ein gesellschaftlicher Konsens. Baumeister und Vohs (2002) sprechen vom sog. *Value Gap*: Werte wie Religion oder Tradition seien heute weitgehend aus der Gesellschaft verschwunden. Bedeutungsvolle Filme können helfen, diese Lücke zu schliessen. Allerdings bleiben sowohl die Frage nach der konkreten inhaltlichen Ausgestaltung dieser Werte als auch die Mechanismen dieser Einflussnahme auf gesellschaftlicher Ebene in den vier dissertationsrelevanten Studien weitgehend unbeantwortet.

Die *Moral Foundations Theory* (Haidt & Joseph, 2008; Tamborini, 2011; Tamborini et al., 2013; Tamborini, 2013) bietet bezüglich der inhaltlichen Ausgestaltung einen vielversprechenden Ansatzpunkt. Nach Haidt und Joseph (2008) werden moralische Urteile meist auf fünf Dimensionen<sup>23</sup> (sog. *moral domains*) gebildet: Sorge (engl. care), Fairness, Loyalität (engl. loyalty), Autorität (engl. authority) und Reinheit (engl. purity).

Mit dem *Model of Intuitive Morality and Exemplars* (MIME) hat Tamborini (2013) die MFT auf die Medienrezeption angewandt. Das Modell kann die Mechanismen der Einflussnahme bedeutsamer Medieninhalte auf gesellschaftlicher Ebene klären.

### **MIME**

Das Modell ist folgendermassen aufgebaut: Tamborini geht davon aus, dass Medieninhalte durch exemplarische Darstellungen (sensu Zillmann, 2002<sup>24</sup>) gewisser *Moral Domains* in Kombination mit der gesellschaftlich bedingten Salienz dieser Domains – Tamborini (2013) spricht vom „*cultural environment*“ (S. 52) – bei Individuen gewisse Werte aktivieren und damit das individuelle Wertesystem einer Person beeinflussen (i.e., festigen oder verändern) können. Dies wiederum kann zu einer erneuten Selektion wertekongruenter Medieninhalte führen, die wiederum und mitunter verstärkend auf der Wertesystem einer

<sup>23</sup> Die Urteile werden dabei durch zwei simultan agierende Systeme gebildet: ein eher langsames, rationales und ein intuitives und unbewusstes, das vor allem auf bereits gefällten Urteilen beruht. Ersteres kommt beispielsweise dann zum Einsatz, wenn verschiedene widersprüchliche Urteile vom intuitiven System vorliegen.

<sup>24</sup> Die Zugänglichkeit solcher Exemplars wird von zwei kognitiven Heuristiken beeinflusst: Verfügbarkeit (engl. availability) und Repräsentativität (engl. representativeness). Zugänglichkeit meint die Geschwindigkeit und Einfachheit des kognitiven Zugangs und mit Repräsentativität meint das Ausmass, in dem ein bestimmtes Objekt zu einer bestimmten Klasse von Objekten gehört (ein Rabe ist beispielsweise repräsentativer für die Klasse Vögel als ein Kiwi) (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974).



Person Einfluss nehmen kann. Tamborini (2013) lehnt sich dabei an Slaters (2007) Konzept der *Reinforcing Spirals* an. Wendet man nun die Überlegungen Tamborinis (2013) auf eudaimonisches Unterhaltungserleben und dessen potentiell identitätsfördernde Wirkung an, so lässt sich argumentieren, dass bei der Rezeption bedeutsamer Medieninhalte nicht nur Werte salient werden, sondern auch Kompetenzerleben, Autonomie, Selbstakzeptanz, Verbundenheit, und das Gefühl, das (eigene) Leben sei sinnvoll, ausgelöst werden. Dies kann zur erneuten Selektion bedeutsamer Medieninhalte führen, deren Wirkung sich dann u.U. verstärkt äussern kann.

Im MIME sind auch längerfristige Prozesse modelliert. Über die Zeit können einzelne Mikroprozesse der Rezeption und Selektion auf Aggregatsebene auswirken. Auf der Makroebene, d.h. im Aggregat, können gewisse Muster der Moralbewertung und der Moralsalienz in Medien und der anschliessenden Selektion entsprechender Medieninhalte zu einem System gemeinsam geteilter Werte, zu sog. „*Morality Subcultures*“ (Tamborini, 2013, S. 60, Herv. MH) führen. Die Präferenzen und Selektionen dieser Subcultures können schliesslich die Produktion entsprechender neuer Inhalte beeinflussen, die wiederum Einfluss auf die oben genannten Cultural Environments und auf die Aktivierung und die Salienz gewisser medienvermittelter Werte nehmen können. Im MIME sind diese kurz- und längerfristigen Prozesse als zirkulär gedacht.

Es lässt sich nun argumentieren, dass die bei Tamborini (2013) beschriebenen Mechanismen nicht nur auf die Aktivierung zentraler (moralischer) Werte (Sorge, Fairness, Autorität, Loyalität und Reinheit) anwendbar sind, sondern auch auf die anderen Dimensionen eudaimonischen Unterhaltungserlebens. Das wiederholte Erleben eudaimonischen Unterhaltungserlebens und die damit verbundene wiederholte Selektion entsprechender Medieninhalte kann damit, wie oben ausgeführt, nicht nur individuelle Identitäten beeinflussen oder festigen, sondern auch Gruppenidentitäten, die wiederum bestimmte Medienselektionen auf individueller Ebene nach sich ziehen können (Harwood, 1999; Slater, 2007; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Damit können Medieninhalte und insbesondere bedeutsame Filme nicht nur auf individueller Ebene, sondern auch auf gesellschaftlicher Ebene positive (i.e., identitätsstiftende) Auswirkungen haben.

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## Anhang A

### Als kumulative Dissertation eingereichte Publikationen

*Anforderungen* für kumulative Dissertationen am IPMZ sind im Rahmen der ausführenden Bestimmungen zur Allgemeinen Doktoratsstufe der Philosophischen Fakultät dargelegt. Siehe Doktoratsordnung der Doktoratsstufe der Philosophischen Fakultät der Universität Zürich, Abschnitt II (Besonderer Teil), A. (allgemeines Doktorat), IPMZ - Institut für Publizistikwissenschaft und Medienforschung, § 3 Absatz 3:

Eine kumulative Dissertation besteht aus einer Sammlung von vier oder mehr wissenschaftlichen Beiträgen (Publikationen), die im Gehalt dem wissenschaftlichen Gewicht einer monographischen Dissertation entsprechen. Die Beiträge müssen noch nicht publiziert, jedoch zur Publikation angenommen sein. Mindestens zwei der eingereichten Beiträge müssen von wissenschaftlichen Fachzeitschriften in einem Peer-Review-Verfahren akzeptiert worden sein. Mindestens zwei der eingereichten Beiträge müssen in Erst- oder Alleinautorenschaft verfasst worden sein.

Hofer, M. (2013). Appreciation and Enjoyment of Meaningful Entertainment. *Journal of Media Psychology*, 25(3), 109–117. doi:10.1027/1864-1105/a000089

Hofer, M., Allemand, M., & Martin, M. (accepted). Age Differences in Non-Hedonic Entertainment Experiences. *Journal of Communication*.

Hofer, M., & Wirth, W. (2012). It's Right to Be Sad: The Role of Metaappraisals in the Sad-Film Paradox – A Multiple Mediator Model. *Journal of Media Psychology: Theories, Methods, and Applications*, 24, 43–54. doi:10.1027/1864-1105/a000061

Wirth, W., Hofer, M., & Schramm, H. (2012). Beyond pleasure: Exploring the eudaimonic entertainment experience. *Human Communication Research*, 38, 406–428. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2958.2012.01434.x

**Anhang B****Weitere Vorträge, Konferenzmanuskripte und Lehrveranstaltungen zum Thema eudaimonisches Unterhaltungserleben**

Hofer, M., & Wirth, W. (2013, June). The Role of Age in Eudaimonic Entertainment Experiences. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the International Communication Association (ICA), June 17-21 2013, London.

Hofer, M. (2013, April). *Are you entertained? Eine mehrdimensionale Messung des Unterhaltungserlebens in Rezeptionssituationen [Are you entertained? A Multi-Dimensional Measure of Enjoyment]*. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Swiss Communication Association, April 04-12-2013, Winterthur, Switzerland.

Hofer, M., & Wirth, W. (2012, May). *It's Right to Be Sad: The Role of Metaappraisals in the Sad Film Paradoxon A Multiple Mediator Model*. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the International Communication Association (ICA), May 24-28 2012, Phoenix.

Hofer, M. (2012, April). Der Einfluss Situationaler Referenzen und genereller Rezeptionsmotivationen auf das Rezeptionserleben bei einem emotionalen Spielfilm. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Swiss Communication Association, April 20-21 2012, Neuchâtel, Switzerland.

Schramm, H., Wirth, W., Hofer, M. (2010, Juni). Entertainment as Eudaimonic Well-Being. Vortrag an der Jahreskonferenz der International Communication Association (ICA), 22-26.06.2010, Singapore

Vorlesung (BA): Unterhaltung durch Medien (HS10, HS11, HS12)

Seminar (BA): Are You Entertained? An Overview of Entertainment Theories (FS12)

## Anhang C

### Erbrachte Eigenleistungen

Gemäss § 7 Absatz 3 der Promotionsverordnung der Philosophischen Fakultät der Universität Zürich muss bei Gemeinschaftspublikationen die erbrachte Eigenleistung erkenn- und nachweisbar sein. Falls diese nicht direkt aus den einzelnen Publikationen hervorgeht, muss dieser Nachweis in der einzureichenden Synopse erfolgen und von der hauptverantwortlichen Betreuungsperson bestätigt werden.

Zur übersichtlichen Darlegung werden erbrachte Eigenleistungen bei Gemeinschaftspublikationen im Folgenden gelistet und abschliessend von der hauptverantwortlichen Betreuungsperson Prof. Dr. Werner Wirth bestätigt.

<sup>i</sup> Studie I: Hofer, M., & Wirth, W. (2012). *It's Right to Be Sad: The Role of Meta-Appraisals in the Sad-Film Paradox – A Multiple Mediator Model*. *Journal of Media Psychology: Theories, Methods, and Applications*, 24, 43–54. doi:10.1027/1864-1105/a000061

Folgende Leistungen sind Eigenleistungen des Erstautors: Studienplanung und –durchführung, Fragebogenerstellung, Entwicklung des Stimulusmaterials, Datenanalyse und Schreiben des kompletten Beitrags, aller Action Letter und Revisionen.

Folgende Leistungen sind durch den Zweitautor des Artikels erbracht worden: Konzeptuelle Idee und Ausarbeitung des theoretischen Modells (EMR-Modell), auf dem der Artikel basiert. Gegenlesen und Kommentieren der ersten Version des Artikels.

<sup>ii</sup> Studie III: Wirth, W., Hofer, M., & Schramm, H. (2012). *Beyond pleasure: Exploring the eudaimonic entertainment experience*. *Human Communication Research*, 38, 406–428. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2958.2012.01434.x

Folgende Leistungen sind Eigenleistungen des Erstautors für die erste der beiden Studien in diesem Artikel (Studie III.1): Leitung des Seminars, Konzeptuelle Idee und Itemformulierung der Items zur Messung eudaimonischen Unterhaltungserlebens.

Folgende Leistungen sind Eigenleistungen des Erstautors für die zweite der beiden Studien in diesem Artikel (Studie III.2): Betreuung der Masterarbeit, aus der die Daten für Studie III.2 stammen.

Folgende Leistungen sind Eigenleistungen des Erstautors für den gesamten Artikel: Gegenlesen und Kommentieren der ersten Version des Artikels vor der Einreichung.

Folgende Leistungen sind Eigenleistungen des Zweitautors für die erste der beiden Studien in diesem Artikel (Studie III.1): Mithilfe in der Studienplanung und der Datenerhebung (im Rahmen eines Seminars), Mithilfe bei der Itemformulierung der Items zur Messung eudaimonischen Unterhaltungserlebens, Fragebogenerstellung.

Folgende Leistungen sind Eigenleistungen des Zweitautors für die zweite der beiden Studien in diesem Artikel (Studie III.2): Betreuung der Masterarbeit, aus der die Daten für Studie III.2 stammen.

Folgende Leistungen sind Eigenleistungen des Zweitautors für den gesamten Artikel: Datenanalyse und Schreiben des kompletten Beitrags, aller Action Letter und Revisionen.

Folgende Leistungen sind Eigenleistungen des Drittautors für die erste der beiden Studien in diesem Artikel (Studie III.1): Leitung des Seminars, Konzeptuelle Idee und Itemformulierung der Items zur Messung eudaimonischen Unterhaltungserlebens

Folgende Leistungen sind Eigenleistungen des Drittautors für die zweite der beiden Studien in diesem Artikel (Studie III.2): keine

Folgende Leistungen sind Eigenleistungen des Drittautors für den gesamten Artikel: Gegenlesen und Kommentieren der ersten Version des Artikels vor der Einreichung

<sup>iii</sup> Studie IV: Hofer, M., Allemand, M., & Martin, M. (accepted). *Age Differences in Non Hedonic Entertainment Experiences*. *Journal of Communication*,

Folgende Leistungen sind durch den Erstautor des Artikels erbracht worden: Studienplanung und –durchführung, Fragebogenerstellung, Entwicklung des Stimulusmaterials, Datenanalyse und Schreiben des kompletten Beitrags, aller Action Letter und Revisionen.

Folgende Leistungen sind durch den Zweitautor des Artikels erbracht worden: Gegenlesen und Kommentieren der ersten Version und der zur Wiedereinreichung überarbeiteten Version des Artikels.

Folgende Leistungen sind durch den Drittautor des Artikels erbracht worden: Bereitstellung der älteren Probanden.

Die erbrachte Eigenleistung wird hiermit bestätigt:

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Prof. Dr. Werner Wirth

Hauptverantwortliche Betreuungsperson

## Studie I

### Bibliographischer Nachweis:

Hofer, M., & Wirth, W. (2012). It's Right to Be Sad: The Role of Meta-Appraisals in the Sad-Film Paradox – A Multiple Mediator Model. *Journal of Media Psychology: Theories, Methods, and Applications*, 24, 43–54. doi:10.1027/1864-1105/a000061

# It's Right to Be Sad

## The Role of Meta-Appraisals in the Sad-Film Paradox – A Multiple Mediator Model

Matthias Hofer and Werner Wirth

Institute of Mass Communication and Media Research, University of Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland

**Abstract.** Although sad films elicit states of sadness and cause onlookers to mourn beloved characters, these media offerings also lead to enjoyment. This paradoxical situation challenges both theoretical approaches and empirical studies in entertainment research. Based on an appraisal-theoretical framework, the present study examined the role of multiple appraisals of recipients' sadness. It is argued that these so-called meta-appraisals are able to transform one's sadness into a positive meta-emotion (i.e., enjoyment); this process is called valence transformation. Results of an experimental study ( $N = 149$ ) showed that in cases of a sad film ending, participants experienced higher levels of sadness than they did in cases of a happy ending. Furthermore, given a sad ending, meta-appraisal processes were activated that mediated the relationship between sadness and enjoyment. If the film had a happy ending, however, there were no indirect effects. Results are discussed in the light of theoretical considerations.

**Keywords:** appraisal, emotion, enjoyment, meta-appraisal, valence transformation

### Introduction

Tragedies have a “dreadful, disastrous, deplorable conclusion . . .” (Mills, 1993, p. 225; also see Feagin, 1983). Since Athenian tragedy (6th century BC), tragedies have been a popular and dramatic media form, presented either in books, theatrical performances, or films. These media offerings can lead to feelings of sorrow, sadness, compassion, and pity, or more noxious emotions (Oliver, Weaver, & Sargent, 2000), which are obviously at odds with pleasure-seeking goals of media recipients (Oliver & Bartsch, 2010). Nevertheless, sad media offerings enjoy great popularity, and the fact that many people find deeply sad and mournful movies entertaining has led to the formulation of the “paradox of the enjoyment of sad films” (Oliver, 1993, p. 315).

This paradox is at odds with the theoretical assumptions of both affective disposition theory (Raney, 2003; Zillmann & Cantor, 1977) and excitation transfer theory (Zillmann, 1994). According to affective disposition theory, individuals develop dispositions toward characters. Enjoyment of a narrative is increased by the justness of its resolution. More specifically, if liked characters who behave morally are rewarded for their behaviors, enjoyment increases; on the other hand, if liked characters are punished for their behaviors, enjoyment decreases (Zillmann & Cantor, 1977). Thus, disposition theory offers a sufficient explanation for the enjoyment of media offerings with happy endings, but not for those with sad endings. The seemingly paradoxical relationship between distress and enjoyment in cases of a happy ending is explained by excitation transfer theory (Zillmann, 1994). According to this theory, empathic distress during the reception of a sad film (often referred to as a tearjerker) leads

to physiological arousal. When a film has a positive ending for the liked protagonist, the onlooker's state of arousal remains high, as physiological arousal declines slowly. The “residual excitation” (de Wied, Zillmann, & Ordman, 1994, p. 94) is then cognitively adjusted, and the dysphoria is converted into euphoria. In other words, the happy ending is responsible for the transformation of valence (from negative to positive).

Both theoretical approaches are well supported by empirical research and can explain the enjoyment of tragedy, if the story has a positive ending. On the other hand, if the liked character dies at the end of the film, the onlooker remains in a state of sadness and distress, and enjoyment is not likely to emerge (Zillmann & Cantor, 1977). Research, however, has repeatedly found a positive association between negative emotions and enjoyment during the reception of movies with sad, mournful, and fearful endings (cf. Oliver, 1993; Oliver, Weaver, & Sargent, 2000). Scholars have considered a wide range of explanations for this paradox. According to Zuckerman (1994), sensation seekers are able to enjoy the feelings of negative arousal that are elicited by sad films. Oliver (1993) showed that women and individuals who score high on the empathy trait are able to enjoy sad movies because they are responsive to negative portrayals and can interpret sad emotional responses in a positive manner. Similarly, Mills (1993) assumed the existence of an attitude that allows an individual to feel good when empathizing with someone who is suffering. In a recent study, Bartsch, Appel, and Storch (2010) found that individuals high in need for affect (Maio & Esses, 2001) experience higher levels of negative affect and evaluate their emotions more positively. These personality-based explanations provide valuable hints for process-based



explanations. According to Schaller (1993), one explanation for the phenomenon that it is sometimes good to feel bad is that one might appreciate one's emotional abilities. The concept that the experience of a negative emotion might, on a meta-level, have a positive valence, is referred to as meta-emotions. This concept was first mentioned by Mayer and Gaschke (1988) and was introduced in communication research by Oliver (1993) (also see Bartsch, Vorderer, Mangold, & Viehoff, 2008; Jäger & Bartsch, 2006; Oliver, 1993; Schramm & Wirth, 2010).

This paper presents research on the sad-film paradox. It is argued that the seemingly paradoxical positive relationship between the sadness experienced during and after the reception of a sad film and the subsequent enjoyment of that film can be explained by the positive cognitive evaluation of the negative emotion, via so-called meta-appraisals. As a result, the negative valence of sadness and distress is transformed into a positively valenced meta-emotion (i.e., enjoyment) (Bartsch et al., 2008; Schramm & Wirth, 2010). Herein, the emotional reactions to media offerings with a focus on sadness are discussed from an appraisal-theoretical perspective, followed by a presentation of the concept of meta-emotions (for thorough reviews, see Bartsch et al., 2008; Jäger & Bartsch, 2006). From an appraisal-theoretical point of view, meta-emotions are regarded as the result of appraisals of one's own emotions (i.e., meta-appraisals).

## Emotions During Media Reception

An explanation of the sad-film paradox requires an investigation of the emotional reactions elicited by sad films. As several studies have shown, a sad film elicits empathic distress and sadness (e.g., de Wied et al., 1994; Gross & Levenson, 1995). Generally, a sad movie with a negative ending leads to a heightened level of sadness (Schramm & Wirth, 2010). Sadness has been conceptualized as an emotion experienced in the face of an unpleasant event (Barr-Zisowitz, 2000; Ellsworth & Scherer, 2003; Lazarus, 1994; Scherer, 2001). It has also been perceived as a response to a goal that has not been attained or achieved. According to Lazarus (1994), the core relational theme in sadness is irrevocable loss. In terms of appraisal theory (cf. Frijda, 1993; Scherer, 2001), sadness emerges through cognitive appraisals of a situation, which may involve the perception that an object or an event is low in pleasantness, low in goal conduciveness, and low in coping potential.

There is a theoretical discussion about the difference between film-induced emotions and real-life emotions (for an overview, see Krämer & Witschel, 2010). For example, one could argue that the difference between film-induced versus real-life sadness lies in the coping potential of the situation. However, if a movie has a sad ending and the protagonist dies, there is certainly some irrevocable loss and the situation is appraised as unpleasant not goal conducive, and the normative value is probably low even though the

situation is film induced and not real. As a consequence, the onlooker experiences a negatively valenced emotion that one could rightly call sadness (or empathic distress). This negatively valenced emotion consists of at least three components (Parkinson, 1997):

- (1) a subjectively valenced feeling;
- (2) physiological and expressive motor responses (e.g., in the case of sadness that induces a slower heart beat and crying; cf. Kunzmann & Grühn, 2005), and
- (3) a certain motivational state.

If, at the same time, the onlooker experiences a feeling of enjoyment during or at the end of the film, the "paradox of the enjoyment of sad films" arises. To address this paradox, Oliver (1993) introduced the concept of meta-emotions. Similarly, to explain the paradoxical enjoyment of tragedy, Feagin (1983) discerned between *direct responses* and *meta-responses*.

## Meta-Emotions

A meta-emotion "can be described as a special case of emotion" (Bartsch et al., 2008, p. 14). Mayer and Gaschke (1988) first mentioned the concept of meta-mood experiences. They defined a meta-mood as "the possible outcome of a regulatory process that monitors, evaluates, and changes mood" (p. 109).<sup>1</sup> Similarly, Jäger and Bartsch (2006) formulated the following thesis about the generation of meta-emotions: "Meta-emotions are elicited when a person appraises his or her own emotions in light of emotionally relevant appraisal criteria" (p. 194). Gottman, Katz, and Hooven (1997) defined meta-emotions as follows: "By meta-emotion we mean emotion about emotion" (p. 6). These different definitions of meta-emotion reflect different lines of conceptualization. While some authors regard meta-emotions as emotional reactions toward one's own emotions (e.g., Jäger & Bartsch, 2006; Oliver, 1993; Schramm & Wirth, 2010), others also include cognitive processes, such as (normative) evaluation or regulation, in the meta-emotion concept (Mayer & Gaschke, 1988; Salovey, 1995).

Using a factor-analytic approach, Mayer and Gaschke (1988) identified five dimensions of reflective emotional experience. The first factor they called "Out of Control Versus Under Control"; individuals who score low on this factor feel frightened by their moods. The second factor, "Confusion Versus Clarity," contained items that ask whether current moods are easily comprehensible or not. The third factor was related to whether the mood was acceptable or should be rejected. The fourth factor was named "Typical Versus Atypical." Finally, the fifth factor, "Change Versus Stability," showed some overlap with the concept of emotion regulation (Gross & John, 2003). Furthermore, Mayer and Gaschke (1988) noted that all five of the factors shared a pleasant-unpleasant dimension. Thus, the meta-mood dimension is not the same as the

<sup>1</sup> Mayer and Gaschke (1988) do not strictly distinguish between moods and emotions (for a thorough differentiation, see Parkinson, Totterdell, Britner, & Reynolds, 1996). In the present study, moods and emotions are always referred to as *emotions*.

pleasant–unpleasant mood dimension. It seems that in some cases, negative emotions can be interpreted as more pleasurable than positive emotions. Anger, for instance, can be pleasant (or goal conducive) on a meta-level (e.g., in conflict situations; cf. Knobloch-Westerwick & Alter, 2006).

The seminal work of Mayer and Gaschke (1988) is extremely useful in the explanation of the seeming paradox of the enjoyment of sad films (cf. Oliver, 1993). However, one problem with their conceptualization is that it mingles cognition and emotion within one theoretical concept. It is true that a “meta-emotion involves cognitive, affective, and motivational aspects” (Bartsch et al., 2008, p. 12); however, if those components are intermingled within a broad constructive framework, conceptual and methodological problems arise in the modeling of the processes of emergence of meta-emotions. Appraisal-theoretical considerations may help to untangle the cognition–emotion relationship (Bartsch et al., 2008; Grandjean & Scherer, 2008; Schramm & Wirth, 2010; Wirth & Schramm 2007). That is, in the explanation of enjoyment as a meta-emotion that emerges during the evaluation of one’s emotions, one must differentiate between cognition and emotion.

## Enjoyment as Meta-Emotion

To untangle the sad-film paradox, Oliver (1993) introduced the notion of meta-experiences of one’s mood into the field of communication research. In her seminal article (1993), she presented the Sad-Film Scale (SFS), a scale that measures general preferences for sad films and also the reasons for those preferences (cf. Schramm & Wirth, 2010). Individuals who scored high on the SFS reported both higher levels of sadness and also higher levels of enjoyment of sad films than individuals who scored low. However, Oliver’s (1993) understanding and operationalization of meta-emotions was more trait-like than state-like (cf. Bartsch et al., 2008). According to Schramm and Wirth (2010), so called meta-appraisals are the cognitive mechanisms by which sadness can be transferred into enjoyment. Starting from Oliver’s work, they presented a state scale based on the SFS, which involved three factors: *sadness salience*, *triviality salience*, and *immersion avoidance*. They found that only the first of these factors (sadness salience) was concerned with emotional experiences during film reception. Consequently, there seems to be a need for a clearer definition (and also operationalization) of meta-appraisals.

In the present paper, it is also argued from an appraisal-theoretical perspective that claims that emotions are elicited by cognitive evaluations (appraisals) of events and situations (Scherer, 1997; 2001), and as these events can occur inwardly as well as outwardly, one can also appraise one’s own emotions. The results of these so called meta-appraisals are meta-emotions (Bartsch et al., 2008; Jäger & Bartsch, 2006; Schramm & Wirth, 2010; Wirth & Schramm, 2007). In viewing situations, one might appraise the negative emotions elicited by sad films as positive in one way or another (Schramm & Wirth, 2010). This, in turn, leads to a transformation of sadness into enjoyment, the so-called

valence transformation (Schramm & Wirth, 2010, p. 322). That is, the negative emotion (sadness) is transformed into a positive meta-emotion (Bartsch et al., 2010; Bartsch et al., 2008; Jäger & Bartsch, 2006; Schramm & Wirth, 2010). Moreover, the positive meta-emotion (enjoyment) cannot be considered independently of the film that elicited it. Thus, meta-emotions are conceived of as both evaluations of the film as a whole *and* positive emotional states that result from positive evaluations of one’s own emotions *during* the film.

Although the theoretical conceptualization of the process is well understood (cf. Bartsch et al., 2008; Oliver, 1993; Schramm & Wirth, 2010), there have been (to date) no empirical tests of the valence transformation hypothesis, and research approaches to this phenomenon lack an appropriate operationalization. However, results of a study by Schramm and Wirth (2010) indicate that valence transformation (i.e., at the level of meta-appraisals) is higher if a movie ends sadly. Strictly speaking, this study did not account for the valence transformation per se, but only for differences in the occurrences of processes that are assumed to be involved in that transformation.

Starting from the appraisal-theoretical frameworks presented by Wirth and Schramm (2007) and Bartsch et al. (2008; also see Bartsch, Mangold, Viehoff, & Vorderer, 2006), enjoyment is conceptualized as a positive meta-emotion that emerges from the appraisal of primary emotions. The basic idea is that emotions such as sadness and fear may be objects of further appraisal processes. This is already reflected in the concept of *reappraisal* (Lazarus, 1994); however, in accordance with the concept of *meta-cognition* (Efklides, 2008; Wells & Cartwright-Hatton, 2004) and the theoretical considerations of Mitmansgruber, Beck, Höfer, and Schüßler (2009), meta-appraisals can be defined as cognitions about emotions. To model the emergence of meta-emotions, it is helpful to differentiate meta-appraisals as antecedent processes of meta-emotions, rather than treating the former as being part of the latter. This distinction is also reasonable from an appraisal-theoretical approach to emotional experiences during media reception (cf. Bartsch et al., 2008).

## Dimensions of Meta-Appraisals

As discussed above, appraisal theories differentiate between various dimensions of appraisals (Frijda, 1993; Scherer, 1997, 2001; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). Bartsch et al. (2008) applied some of these dimensions to appraisals of one’s own emotions.

*Novelty/attentional activity.* Research on appraisal dimensions (Ellsworth & Scherer, 2003; Scherer, 2001; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985) has revealed that attention is an important aspect of emotion, as attention determines whether a stimulus is processed or not. According to Lazarus (2001), the triggering of attention depends largely on the stimulus. Likewise, emotions can be the objects of attentional deployment. Thus, attention to one’s own feelings has been conceptualized as a meta-mood construct (Salovey, 1995).

Lischetzke and Eid (2003), for instance, found that attention to one's feelings has a positive effect on well-being. Therefore, it is highly plausible to assume that attention serves as a means of appraising one's sadness during the reception of a sad film, which, in turn, leads to a positive meta-emotion (i.e., enjoyment).

*Clarity.* Clarity about one's own feelings can also influence one's well-being. Evidence for the meta-appraisal dimension of clarity stems from research on meta-mood experiences (Mayer & Gaschke, 1988). If one clearly understands what one is feeling, then one has a greater capacity to transform and change those feelings (Lischetzke & Eid, 2003).

*Goal conduciveness.* According to Knobloch-Westrick and Alter (2006), negative emotions like anger can be goal conducive in certain situations. It is conceivable that the sadness experienced during and after a sad film corresponds to the goal of feeling empathic with the protagonist(s) (cf. Mills, 1993; Oliver, 1993; Oliver & Bartsch, 2010). Another goal of sadness, in the event that the sadness evokes tears, could be the feeling of relief that one feels after having cried (Efran & Spangler, 1979).

*Norm compatibility* is an important appraisal dimension because social and/or personal values and norms are an essential part of one's emotional life. The existence and reinforcement of these norms depend largely on appropriate emotional reactions (Scherer, 2001). According to Bartsch et al. (2008), norm compatibility is also a central meta-appraisal dimension during movie reception.

*Pleasantness* is probably the meta-appraisal dimension that receives the most attention in communication research. According to mood-management theory (e.g., Zillmann, 1988), recipients tend to appraise their negative emotions as pleasurable if they are bored prior to the reception of an unpleasant film (see also Bartsch et al., 2008).

This list of possible meta-appraisal dimensions is not exhaustive, but it gives a general idea of the kinds of processes that one might use to evaluate one's emotions (see also Bartsch et al., 2008).

Finally, some closing remarks on the nature of meta-appraisals are necessary. First, meta-appraisals are regarded as parallel processes, although the processes might be initiated at different times (e.g., Grandjean & Scherer, 2008). An important question concerning the appraisal of one's own emotions is whether or not the emotions are in the viewer's conscious awareness. According to Oliver (1993), meta-emotions may occur at a conscious or unconscious level. According to appraisal theories (Scherer, 2001), appraisal processes can occur at any of the three levels of processing postulated by Leventhal (1982): At the lowest level (the sensory-motor level), appraisals occur automatically; at the second level (the schematic level), appraisals are composed of schemas and the accumulated (learned) history of the individual; at the third level (the conceptual level), appraisals are based on propositional memory and occur in a reflexive (rather than automatic) manner. According to theories on meta-cognition (Efklides, 2008; Wells & Cartwright-Hatton, 2004) and the theoretical considerations of Mayer and Gaschke (1988), meta-appraisals are consid-

ered to occur on a conscious, and therefore conceptual, level of processing.

## The Mediating Role of Meta-Appraisals

To explain more explicitly the role of meta-appraisals in the development of valence transformations, it is expedient to begin with emotional reactions that are the results of the appraisals of film-related situations and/or actions. These emotional reactions are the objects of meta-appraisals. More precisely, meta-appraisals are those processes in which the felt emotions are appraised in relation to the underlying film-related situations and/or actions (and, in the end, in relation to the film as a whole). This meta-appraisal process, then, results in a meta-emotion. That is, meta-appraisals are both dependent (they are elicited by emotions during the media reception) and independent (they result in meta-emotions) variables. In other words, appraisals "can be outcomes of the emotion process as its antecedent conditions" (Frijda & Zeelenberg, 2001, p. 151). Thus, meta-appraisals are conceived of as *mediators*.

One could, however, argue that meta-appraisals are moderators, rather than mediators. Examples from analogous research on meta-cognition (i.e., cognition about cognition; for a review, see Efklides, 2008) may illustrate these two conflicting views, and may also help resolve the apparent conflict between meta-appraisals as moderators and mediators.

Meta-cognition can be divided into three main aspects: meta-cognitive knowledge, meta-cognitive skills or strategies, and meta-cognitive experiences. Whereas the former two aspects are treated more or less as stable personality factors, the last is conceived of as being a dynamic process that may depend on other processes (e.g., the feeling of knowing; cf. Koriati, 2000). Research has shown that meta-cognitive knowledge has a moderating effect on the impact of an experimentally manipulated outcome (Spada, Nikcevic, Moneta, & Wells, 2008). More specifically, meta-cognitive knowledge can moderate the relationship between perceived stress and negative emotions. Conversely, meta-cognitive experiences have also been shown to act as mediators (e.g., Keith & Frese, 2005; Spada, Nikcevic, Moneta, & Wells, 2007).

One can infer from these examples that personality traits or stable beliefs act as variables that are not easily influenced by processes such as emotions, and that these factors therefore act as more or less independent *moderators* (Spada et al., 2008). On the other hand, if a construct is conceived of as a process, that construct may still depend on other processes (e.g., on emotions; cf. Spada et al., 2007), which, in turn, may trigger further processes. Therefore, processes are mostly conceived of as *mediators*.

The research on meta-cognition, when applied to the present research, suggests that meta-appraisals are "dynamic processes" (Bartsch et al., 2008, p. 14; Wirth & Schramm, 2007, p. 168) that depend on preceding processes (i.e., emotions) which, in turn, influence or initiate other processes (i.e., meta-emotions). Thus, given their simultaneous status

as both dependent and independent variables (cf. Frijda & Zeelenberg, 2001), meta-appraisals are best conceived of as mediators.

## Rationale and Hypotheses

In an experimental study, Schramm and Wirth (2010) showed that sadness was greatest among participants who watched a sad-ending version of a stimulus film; the same conclusion was reached in a study by Zillmann and Cantor (1977). As discussed above, it is plausible to assume that a sad film with a sad ending elicits a higher level of sadness than does a sad film with a pleasurable ending. Thus, the first hypothesis (H1) states that the level of sadness is an important condition for the elicitation of meta-appraisals (cf. Bartsch et al., 2008) (see also Hypothesis 4, below).

*Hypothesis 1 (H1):* A sad film with a sad ending will elicit a higher level of sadness than will a sad film with a happy ending.

The second hypothesis (H2) represents the sad-film paradox: namely, that there is a positive association between sadness of a movie and the enjoyment that is experienced from the movie.

*Hypothesis 2 (H2):* The sadness experienced during the reception of a sad movie is positively associated with the enjoyment of the movie.

The third hypothesis represents the theoretical consideration that meta-appraisals are the cognitive mechanisms by which the valence of negative emotions is transformed into positive meta-emotions. Therefore, an emotion (in the present study, *sadness*) which occurs at the beginning of the process is appraised on different meta-appraisal dimensions, and this cognitive evaluation may then lead to a meta-emotion (in the present study, *enjoyment*). This hypothesis tests for the role of meta-appraisals as mediators.

*Hypothesis 3 (H3):* The relationship between sadness and entertainment experience is mediated through meta-appraisals.

The sad ending of a movie and the experience of sadness are, respectively, necessary preconditions for the sad-film paradox. In other words, if there was a happy ending to the film, the paradox would not arise. According to the theoretical considerations above, the sad-film paradox can be solved by understanding the mechanism of valence transformation. Valence transformation occurs if one's emotions are appraised as acceptable, pleasurable, compatible with the

norm, conducive to a goal, attentively observed, etc., which, in turn, leads to a positive meta-emotion (i.e., enjoyment). According to excitation transfer theory (Zillmann, 1994) and affective disposition theory (Raney, 2003), a positive ending of a sad film leads to a positive or even euphoric feeling. Thus, given a happy ending, valence transformation is not necessary, and is therefore not likely to occur. Thus, valence transformation will only occur if the sad film has a sad ending. In other words, if the movie has a happy ending, the transformation is primarily "accomplished" by the movie itself. More precisely, the film itself provides positive feelings, which, in turn, terminate the negative emotions. Moreover, the sudden contrast between the negative and the positive emotions leads to all-encompassing relief, and the enjoyment described by Zillmann (1994). Thus, there is no need for transforming one's negative emotions by appraising them in a positive way in order to feel enjoyment (see a more precise outline of its nature below). However, to feel enjoyment when the movie has a sad ending (which, as we will show, goes along with a significantly higher level of sadness), an "additional effort" is necessary because the film does not provide any means by which valence transformation could be more easily accomplished.<sup>2</sup>

*Hypothesis 4 (H4):* The indirect effects of sadness on enjoyment through meta-appraisals in the case where the movie has a sad ending differ from the indirect effects of sadness on enjoyment through meta-appraisals in the case of a movie that has a happy ending.

## Method

### Participants

A total of 149 participants (96 women; 53 men), aged 18–87 years ( $M_{age} = 42.44$ ,  $SD_{age} = 25.93$ ), participated in the study. The sample was drawn from the local community or from students in communication science.

### Design Stimulus Material and Experimental Manipulation

The study employed a between-subjects design with two conditions (sad ending versus happy ending). A shortened version of the film *Dancer in the Dark* (USA, 2000; directed by Lars von Trier, rated PG-13) was used as the stimulus. The film, set in Washington State in 1964, features the Czech immigrant Selma Jeřková (played by the Icelandic singer Björk) who has moved to the United States with her son Gene. Selma works in a local factory and lives a life of poverty in a mobile trailer on the property of town policeman Bill Houston

<sup>2</sup> Excitation transfer theory also places the burden on cognition (de Wied et al., 1994). However, according to de Wied et al. (1994), the crucial point of the emergence of enjoyment is the resolution of empathic distress. This resolution is provided by the happy ending of a film.

and his wife Linda. However, she suffers from a degenerative hereditary disease which is gradually and inexorably diminishing her eyesight. Her son Gene also suffers from this disease. To pay for an operation that will prevent her son from suffering the same fate as herself, Selma puts every penny of her savings into a tin cup in her kitchen. One day, Bill reveals to Selma that he is financially broke and cannot bear to tell his wife. Furthermore, Bill steals Selma's life savings that were meant for Gene's operation. When Selma finds out about the theft, she confronts Bill. The situation gets out of hand and Selma shoots him, as a result of which she is put on trial, and sentenced to death by hanging. Yet, Selma refuses legal help, as hiring a lawyer would deplete her life savings, which are intended for Gene's operation.

The plot was introduced to the viewers through a prefix that was the same in both experimental conditions. The prefix consisted of a textual story line illustrated with images of the protagonists. The experimental manipulation consisted of two endings to this sad and mournful movie, which were also introduced with textual information presented on the screen in a cinematic manner. The manipulations were intended to elicit two different levels of sadness, as well as different types of meta-appraisal processes. In the happy-ending experimental group ( $n = 73$ ), the participants were informed that Selma was not hanged, and that her son had received the appropriate treatment to keep his eyesight. In the sad-ending experimental group ( $n = 76$ ), the participants were informed that Selma was hanged, and that her son had gone blind. Participants were randomly assigned to one or the other of the two experimental conditions.

*Dancer in the Dark* was chosen as a stimulus because it features a highly likeable and moral character for whom a positive ending is desired (cf. Raney, 2003). If, however, the film ends sadly for the main character, a valence transformation is required to ensure enjoyment.

## Procedure

Participants were first presented with the prefix. Subsequently, each participant watched one of the two experimental manipulations of the film. Viewings were on a large screen (1.65 m  $\times$  2.20 m), in a shaded and carpeted room. After the stimulus presentation, participants completed an online questionnaire on a nearby computer. They were then debriefed and dismissed.

## Measures

*Sadness* was assessed using three items from the Differential Emotion Scale (DES; Izard, Dougherty, Bloxom, & Kotch, 1974). For each item, participants responded using a 5-point Likert scale to indicate how well the item described their feelings that arose during the film (1 = *not at all* to 5 = *very strong*;  $\alpha = .784$ ,  $M = 3.24$ ,  $SD = 0.99$ ).

*Scale construction of meta-appraisals.* One goal of the present study was to develop a measure for meta-appraisals that explicitly measures appraisals of one's own emotions.

Based on the Geneva Appraisal Questionnaire (GAQ; Geneva Emotion Research Group, 2002) and on items from the Meta-Mood Experience Scale (Mayer & Gaschke, 1988), 35 items were formulated that reflect different meta-appraisal dimensions. In the questionnaire, these items were presented after the items on sadness. A principal axis factor analysis with a promax rotation ( $\kappa = 4$ ) was employed to reduce the items into subscales. Items showing low loadings ( $< .40$ ), low communalities, and/or cross loadings on the factors ( $\Delta < .30$ ) were removed. The resulting factor solution explained 70.38% of the variance, with each item having high loadings on one factor and low loadings on the other factors.

A summary of the items, loadings, alpha values, and descriptive statistics is presented in Table 1 (see also the Appendix). The results indicate that the meta-appraisal dimension of *goal conduciveness* was not represented in the final scale, as the items that covered this dimension were cross-loaded on other factors ( $\Delta < .30$ ); thus, these items were removed.

*Meta-emotion of enjoyment.* Enjoyment was measured using three items that measured both the degree of positive evaluation of the movie and positive meta-emotional state associated with it. Because of low internal consistency, one item was excluded. The resulting scale had a satisfactory internal consistency ( $M = 2.86$ ,  $SD = 1.07$ ,  $\alpha = .745$ ; e.g., "Altogether, it gave me pleasure to watch the movie" and "All in all, I felt well entertained by the movie.")

Finally, an item was also included to verify that the participants evaluated the two stimulus versions differently: "How did you experience the end of the movie?" The scale ranged from 1 = *very negatively* to 5 = *very positively* ( $M = 2.93$ ,  $SD = 1.62$ ).

## Results

*Manipulation check.* An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine whether the movie endings were experienced differently by the two experimental groups. The results indicate that the positive ending was evaluated more positively than the negative ending ( $M = 4.35$ ,  $SD = 0.87$ ), and that the negative ending was evaluated more negatively than the positive ending,  $M = 1.53$ ,  $SD = 0.72$ ,  $F(1, 147) = 464.894$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .76$ .

H1 suggests that the sad ending of the film should elicit more sadness than the positive ending; this was confirmed by an ANOVA, which showed that the sad ending elicited a higher level of sadness ( $M = 3.41$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ) than did the happy ending,  $M = 3.07$ ,  $SD = 0.95$ ,  $F(1, 147) = 4.576$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .03$ ). Thus, H1 was confirmed. The results remained stable after controlling for sex (coded: male = 0, female = 1) and age,  $F(1, 139) = 7.505$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .05$ ). An analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) revealed a significant influence of sex on sadness,  $F(1, 139) = 15.357$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .1$ ): Women experienced a higher level of sadness than did men. This finding replicates the results of prior research by Oliver, Weaver, and Sargent (2000). Age had no effect on sadness,  $F(1, 139) = 0.064$ , ns.

Table 1. Item loadings and descriptive statistics

	Norm compatibility	Clarity	Attention	Pleasantness
My feelings were appropriate with regard to the film.	.95			
From a moral and ethical point of view, my feelings were appropriate.	.80			
My emotions fit with what was depicted.	.79			
I evaluate my feelings during the films as appropriate.	.76			
My emotions during the film were absolutely adequate.	.74			
It was totally adequate how I felt when I watched the movie.	.68			
I can precisely describe what I have felt during the movie.		.82		
During the movie I always knew what I was feeling.		.80		
I know exactly what I have felt.		.80		
I find it quite easy to describe my feelings during the movie.		.76		
During the movie, I thought about my feelings.			.91	
I observed my feelings during the movie.			.76	
I concentrated on my feelings during the movie.			.60	
I didn't like my feelings. (r)				.81
My feelings were unpleasant. (r)				.72
I didn't like my feelings during the film. (r)				.56
Percentage of variance accounted for	32.97	15.60	11.58	10.23
Eigenvalues	5.27	2.50	1.85	1.64
Cronbach's $\alpha$	.907	.870	.731	.791
Mean (SD)	4.08 (0.77)	3.63 (0.90)	2.98 (0.91)	3.26 (1.00)

Note. Loadings below .30 are omitted.

It should be noted that the *levels* of the four meta-appraisal dimensions were not affected by the experimental manipulation. The experiment was intended to manipulate the *process* of valence transformation, and thus the indirect effects of sadness on enjoyment through meta-appraisals. Therefore, to examine H2 and H3, a multiple mediator model (e.g., Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007) was calculated using the SPSS macro for multiple mediator models by Preacher and Hayes (2004). All regression weights are depicted in Figure 1.

As observed in Figure 1, sadness had a significant effect on enjoyment (i.e., the total effect of sadness on enjoyment). H2 was therefore confirmed. Furthermore, the direct effect between sadness and enjoyment was less than the total effect; thus, in the terms of Baron and Kenny (1986), there is at least a partial mediation effect. However, the indirect

effects should be quantified so as to detect the mediated effect (Hayes, 2009). Using bootstrap estimation (2,000 samples) the analysis revealed a positive indirect effect of sadness on enjoyment through norm compatibility and a negative indirect effect of sadness on enjoyment through pleasantness (see Table 2). The indirect effect of norm compatibility was stronger than that of pleasantness (normal theory test:  $z = 2.96, p < .01$ ) (see Table 2). Difference contrast analysis revealed significant differences between the indirect effects of norm compatibility and (a) clarity ( $z = 2.84, p < .05$ ), (b) attention ( $z = 2.94, p < .01$ ), and (c) pleasantness ( $z = 3.34, p < .001$ ). The indirect effect of pleasantness was negative (normal theory test:  $z = -1.82, p < .1$ ). The indirect effects of both clarity and attention were not significant (0 was within the 95% confidence intervals).

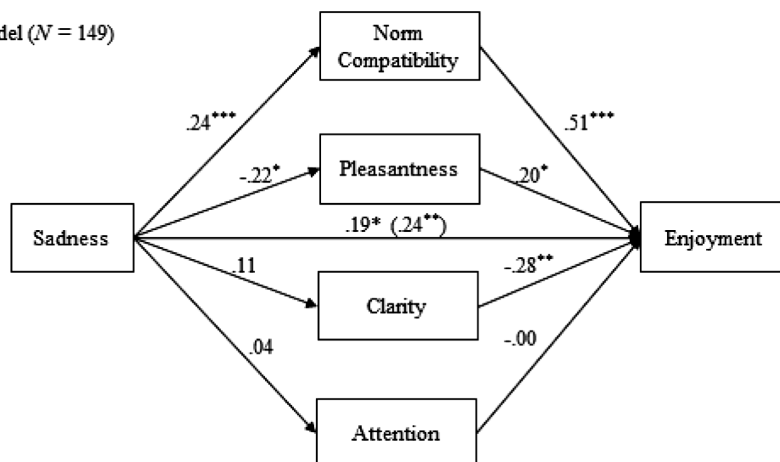
General Model ( $N = 149$ )

Figure 1. Multiple mediation model (general model) using the SPSS Macro by Preacher and Hayes (2004). Coefficients are unstandardized coefficients. The numbers in parentheses reflect the unstandardized regression coefficients in the absence of the mediating variables (i.e., the total effect). \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Table 2. Indirect effects of sadness on enjoyment: Bootstrapping mediation analysis

Meta-appraisal	Bootstrap estimate (SE)	95% Confidence intervals	
		LL	UL
Norm compatibility	.13 (.05)	.05	.27
Clarity	-.03 (.03)	-.11	.00
Attention	.02 (.03)	-.02	.02
Pleasantness	-.04 (.02)	-.11	-.01

Note. LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

To examine H4, two multiple mediator models were computed using the SPSS macro by Preacher and Hayes (2004): one model for the group who had seen the stimulus with the sad ending ( $n = 76$ ) and one for the group who had seen the stimulus with a happy ending ( $n = 73$ ) (see Figure 2).

The indirect effects are listed in Table 3. For the group with the sad ending, the analysis revealed two indirect effects: a positive effect of norm compatibility and a negative effect of clarity (pleasantness showed no significant

effect). The negative effect of clarity arises because of the negative path from sadness to clarity and the positive path from clarity to enjoyment. In other words, the more clarity there is about sadness, the less enjoyment emerges. On the other hand, no significant indirect effects were observed in the happy ending group (Table 3). The indirect effects were compared between the two groups using two-tailed  $t$  tests (see Table 3). The results showed that the indirect effects of norm compatibility and clarity differed significantly between the two experimental groups. Also, the squared multiple correlations between the two models differed (sad ending group:  $R^2_{Adj} = .38$ ; happy ending group  $R^2_{Adj} = .09$ ). Thus, H4 was partially confirmed.

## Discussion

The present study examined the role of meta-appraisals in the valence transformation of sadness into enjoyment. Meta-appraisals were introduced as cognitive variables that mediate between sadness and enjoyment during a sad movie. Enjoyment was introduced as a meta-emotion elicited by meta-appraisals.

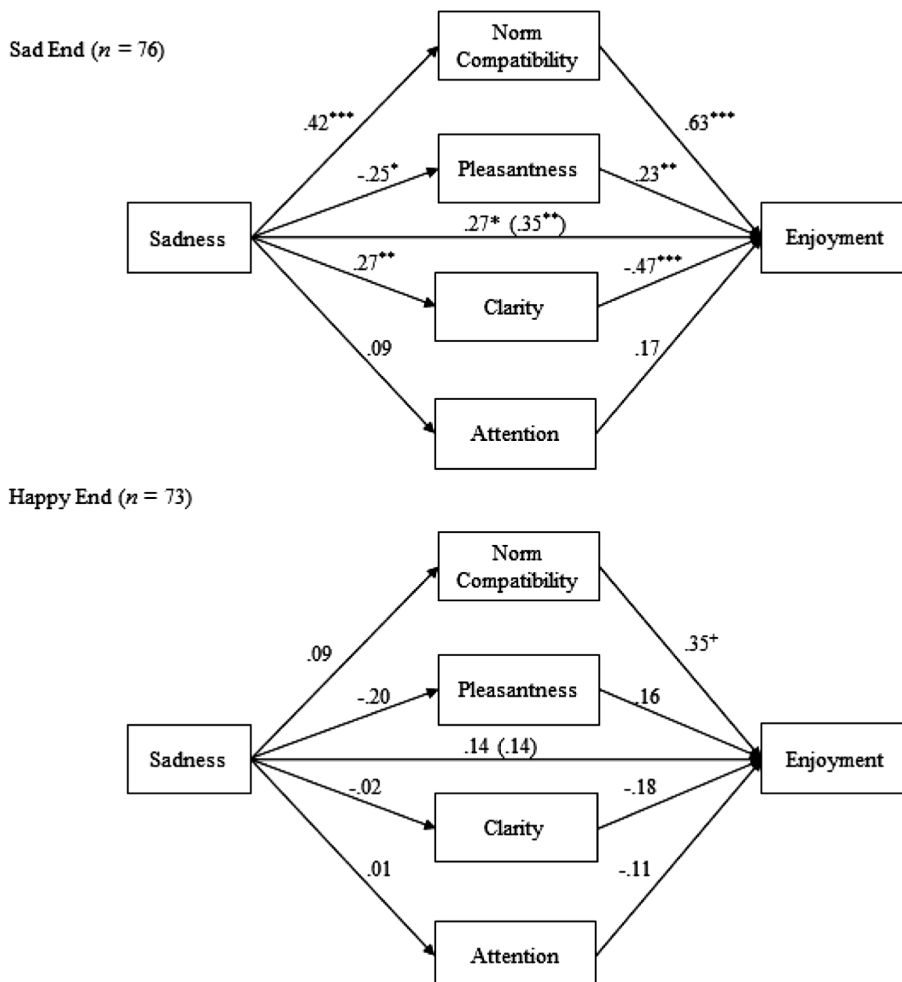


Figure 2. Multiple mediation models (group models). Coefficients are unstandardized coefficients. The numbers in parentheses reflect the unstandardized regression coefficients in the absence of the mediating variables (i.e., the total effect). \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Table 3. Indirect effects of sadness on enjoyment: Bootstrapping mediation analysis

	Experimental group						
	Sad end ( <i>n</i> = 76)			Happy end ( <i>n</i> = 73)			<i>t</i>
	Bootstrap estimate ( <i>SE</i> )	95% Confidence intervals		Bootstrap estimate ( <i>SE</i> )	95% Confidence intervals		
		LL	UL		LL	UL	
LL		UL	LL		UL		
Meta-appraisal							
Norm compatibility	.27 (.09)	.12	.47	.03 (.03)	−.01	.13	2.557*
Clarity	−.13 (.06)	−.27	−.02	.01 (.03)	−.03	.09	2.075*
Attention	.02 (.03)	−.01	.08	−.00 (.03)	−.08	.05	.814
Pleasantness	−.06 (.04)	−.15	−.00	−.03 (.03)	−.15	.01	.600

Note. LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit. \**p* < .05.

The strongest indirect effect was that of sadness on enjoyment through norm compatibility; this indirect effect was positive, indicating that the higher the level of sadness, the greater the evaluation of the emotion as norm compatible, and in turn, the greater the experience of enjoyment. In the case of a sad film ending, the indirect effect of sadness on enjoyment through norm compatibility was even stronger. This result could be related to the narrative structure of the film, as well as the characters of the protagonists depicted in the stimulus film. In other words, to feel sad while witnessing the death of a highly likeable character was perceived as morally right. This, in turn, may have led to enjoyment of the film. Thus, the enjoyment of tragedies seems to be mainly the product of the positive normative evaluations of negative feelings. A similar idea can be found in Tamborini (2011), who introduced moral foundations theory (MFT) and its application in entertainment research. According to this theory, character actions are evaluated on five different dimensions (harm, fairness, loyalty, authority, and purity), which are either automatic or controlled. Although meta-appraisals do have a somewhat different object – namely, one's own emotions – MFT could also be a valuable approach in research on valence transformation. That is, sadness may arise because a liked and morally behaving character is in trouble or even dies, as in the stimulus film used in this study. Consequently, whenever emotions that are caused by narratives are appraised, the narrative *and* the characters depicted are both objects of these appraisals. It is, however, possible that in other films or types of films, different meta-appraisal dimensions turn out to be important. Thus, further research is needed to examine these processes by comparing results using different films.

The marginally significant negative indirect effect of sadness on enjoyment through pleasantness in the general model is established because the path from sadness to pleasantness was negative whereas the path from pleasantness to enjoyment was positive (see Figures 1 and 2). That is, as the level of sadness increased, the appraisal of the sadness as positive decreased. At first glance, this negative path might be surprising because, according to Oliver (1993) and Feagin (1983) (see also Bartsch et al., 2008), one should evaluate one's own emotions as pleasurable so as to feel

entertained by a tragedy. However, to carry out a valence transformation, it is not necessary that all meta-appraisal dimensions contribute to the valence transformation in the same way. Moreover, not every dimension must contribute to the transformation in any given instance. In contrast, it is possible that the direct evaluation of a negative emotion is negatively valenced. This study showed that the principal dimension of the transformation process was norm compatibility. That is, because negative feelings during the sad film and after the negative ending were considered as normatively adequate and positive, the overall meta-appraisal was positive. However, the indirect effect of pleasantness was only marginally significant.

Another effect of interest is the negative indirect effect of sadness on enjoyment through clarity, in the group who received the sad ending of the film. The path from sadness to clarity was positive, indicating that higher levels of sadness led to a clearer emotional experience. However, the path from clarity to enjoyment was negative, resulting in a negative indirect effect. Thus, in the sad-ending group, the participants who reported more clarity about their sadness experienced less enjoyment. Research on the dysfunctional effects of the emotion regulation strategy of rumination (i.e., the focusing of thoughts on a depressed mood) can be used to at least partially explain this finding. Nolen-Hoeksema, Morrow, and Fredrickson (1993), for instance, showed that a ruminative coping style prolonged periods of depression. In the context of the present results, these findings could indicate that clarity about sadness can lead to its prolongation, and thus to a negative effect on enjoyment. However, this post hoc explanation is highly speculative and requires further investigation.

A not-so-surprising result of this study was the nonsignificant indirect effect of sadness through attention on enjoyment. Neither the path from sadness to attention nor the path from attention to enjoyment was significant. This finding conflicts with the findings of prior research, in which emotions were found to induce attention to one's self and thus also to one's emotions (Salovey, 1995). According to the prior research, the a-path should be significant. One explanation for the finding that attention and enjoyment are unrelated could be that the sadness elicited by the film was not



new for the participants, and therefore they did not pay extra attention to their emotions. Concerning possible differences between real-world and media-induced emotions (as discussed earlier), this finding could serve as an additional indication of the special status of media-induced emotions.

One methodological aspect of the present study deserves attention: namely, the manipulation of the ending did not elicit different levels of meta-appraisal dimensions. Rather, it was the mediation process itself (i.e., the multiplicative coefficients  $a_i \times b_i$ ) that was manipulated. This finding is not in line with prior research by Schramm and Wirth (2010), who found that differences in the *levels* of meta-appraisals were related to the experimental manipulation. However, their operationalization was different from that of this study. Moreover, they examined the effects of multiple sad endings but did not contrast the sad endings with happy endings. Consequently, their manipulations of the endings were different from those used here. Based on a study by Juslin and Laukka (2003), Schramm and Wirth (2010) found interesting influences of film music on the emotions and meta-emotions experienced during reception. They found that a sad film ending enriched by sad music led to a higher sadness salience than did the same ending with a less sad soundtrack. However, as stated above, they did not explicitly explore the process of valence transformation.

## Conclusion

The present study provides theoretically plausible and conceptually sound (Bartsch et al., 2008; Schramm & Wirth, 2010; Wirth & Schramm, 2007) insights into the cognitive evaluation of sadness during a sad film. The results of the study demonstrated that enjoyment, understood as a positive meta-emotion, can be regarded as an outcome of cognitive evaluation; this can be viewed as one possible solution of the paradox of the enjoyment of sad films, which can be expressed as a positive relationship between a negative emotional state (sadness) and enjoyment. It was found that different meta-appraisal processes, and in particular the evaluation of sadness as norm compatible, mediate the relationship between sadness and enjoyment. It is important to note that these evaluations are always subjective and depend on an individual's perception of his or her emotions, as well as on an individual's goals. Thus, future research should examine both individual and situational differences in meta-appraisal processes, and thereby integrate knowledge from personality-based explanations of the sad-film paradox. It would be interesting, for instance, to compare the processes of meta-appraisal in high empathizers with those in low empathizers (cf. Oliver, 1993). Ultimately, future research should take steps toward answering an extended version of the question originally formulated by Bartsch et al. (2008, p. 18): What kind of people like what kind of emotions *as a result of which processes* under what circumstances and why?

The time framework for the development of meta-emotional and meta-appraisal processes is also an important

consideration in the context of the present research. The valence transformation of negative to positive emotions is conceptualized as a process in which negative emotions become an object of cognitive appraisal (meta-appraisal), which in turn leads to the formation of positive meta-emotions (enjoyment). Undoubtedly, there is a temporal component in this process that cannot be revealed by post hoc designs (see also Preacher & Hayes, 2004), although the order of questions in the questionnaire in this study was intended to integrate the temporal component of the process into the study. However, future studies should use not only standardized postexposure questionnaires but also process-related measures, such as electromyography (EMG; cf. Ravaja, 2004), during exposure, to make the analysis of processes of reception explicit. Using EMG measures, one could possibly detect moments of valence shift both during and after exposure. Studies using EMG may also be able to identify the events in narrative that are responsible for, or facilitate, valence transformation. A detailed and time-based content analysis of the narrative structure and the characters depicted could provide valuable insights into processes and variables that might also influence valence transformation.

Finally, considering recent developments in entertainment research, it would be intriguing to explore the role of meta-appraisals in the formation of gratifications that are beyond mere pleasure, such as appreciation (Oliver & Bartsch, 2010) and the reception of meaningful cinematic experiences (Oliver & Hartmann, 2010). The dimension of norm compatibility, which played an important role in valence transformation in this study, may be important in other meta-appraisal processes as well.

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Matthias Hofer (MA) is a PhD student at the University of Zurich, Institute of Mass Communication and Media Research, in the section Media Psychology & Effects. His main research areas are media audiences and effects, entertainment and emotion research, media and psychophysiology, and theories and methods of communication research.

Matthias Hofer  
Institute of Mass Communication and Media Research  
University of Zurich  
Andreasstrasse 15  
8050 Zurich  
Switzerland  
Tel. +41 44 635-2063  
Fax +41 44 634-4934  
E-mail m.hofer@ipmz.uzh.ch



Werner Wirth is a full professor of communication and empirical media research at the University of Zurich, Institute of Mass Communication and Media Research, and head of the section Media Psychology & Effects. His main research areas are media audiences and effects, persuasion, entertainment and emotion research, political communication, advertising effects, online and mobile communication, and theories and methods of communication research.

## Appendix

### Meta-Appraisal Items in Original Language (German)

Dimension	Item
Normverträglichkeit (Norm Compatibility)	Meine Gefühle während des Films waren für das Gezeigte angemessen.
Normverträglichkeit (Norm Compatibility)	Meine Gefühle waren aus moralischer und ethischer Sicht akzeptabel.
Normverträglichkeit (Norm Compatibility)	Meine Gefühle passten zur Handlung des Films.
Normverträglichkeit (Norm Compatibility)	Meine Gefühle während des Films fand ich passend.
Normverträglichkeit (Norm Compatibility)	Meine Gefühle während des Filmes fand ich absolut passend.
Normverträglichkeit (Norm Compatibility)	Meine Gefühle während des Filmes fand ich für das Gezeigte völlig angemessen.
Klarheit (Clarity)	Was ich gefühlt habe, kann ich sehr genau beschreiben.
Klarheit (Clarity)	Mir war während des Films jederzeit klar, was ich gefühlt habe.
Klarheit (Clarity)	Ich weiss genau, was ich gefühlt habe.
Klarheit (Clarity)	Es fällt mir leicht, meine Gefühle zu beschreiben.
Aufmerksamkeit (Attention)	Ich habe während des Filmes über meine Gefühle nachgedacht.
Aufmerksamkeit (Attention)	Während des Films beobachtete ich meine Gefühle.
Aufmerksamkeit (Attention)	Ich habe mich während des Filmes nicht auf meine Gefühle konzentriert. (r)
Angenehmheit (Pleasantness)	Ich mochte meine Gefühle nicht. (r)
Angenehmheit (Pleasantness)	Meine Gefühle waren mir unangenehm. (r)
Angenehmheit (Pleasantness)	Ich mochte meine Gefühle während des Films nicht. (r)

Note. Items are in the same order as in Table 1.

## Studie II

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# Appreciation and Enjoyment of Meaningful Entertainment

## The Role of Mortality Salience and Search for Meaning in Life

Matthias Hofer

University of Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland

**Abstract.** Appreciation is an audience response associated with entertainment portrayals concerned with the meaning of life and human existence. Appreciation has been shown to be conceptually and empirically different from enjoyment, which is characterized as pleasure and fun. Drawing upon terror management theory, this research investigates first the influence of reminders of one's own death on appreciation and enjoyment of a meaningful film and second, the influence of the search for meaning in one's life on these outcomes. Results of an experimental study ( $N = 60$ ) showed that mortality salience increased appreciation of a meaningful film, but only for those who rated highly for search for meaning in life. Concerning enjoyment, a reverse pattern was found: Participants who intensely search for meaning in their lives enjoyed the film when their own mortality had not been made salient before watching. Results are discussed in the light of theoretical considerations about entertainment experiences and meaning.

**Keywords:** appreciation, enjoyment, mortality salience, search for meaning in life, meaningful film

Recently, entertainment researchers have extended the notion of the entertainment experience by recognizing that entertainment is more than mere pleasure or enjoyment (Oliver & Bartsch, 2010, 2011; Oliver & Hartmann, 2010; Tamborini, Bowman, Eden, Grizzard, & Organ, 2010; Wirth, Hofer, & Schramm, 2012). These recent conceptualizations account for phenomena such as the paradox of the enjoyment of sad films (Oliver, 1993) and the perception of a deeper meaning or the satisfaction of higher-order needs (Tamborini et al., 2010). Oliver and Bartsch (2010, 2011) introduced the concept of *appreciation* as a unique audience response that is most likely associated with so-called *meaningful* entertainment offerings that leave viewers contemplating life's meaning. Accordingly, the authors characterize appreciation as the personal meaning that is derived from a media offering. That is, viewers might connect themes depicted in a movie with those in their own lives or might derive a sense that life itself has meaning.

To date, several conceptual articles on appreciation and meaningful movie experiences have been published (Klimmt, 2011; Oliver & Bartsch, 2010, 2011; Oliver & Hartmann, 2010); however, few (or no) experimental studies have been conducted that would allow causal inferences about appreciation and meaning or about differences between appreciation and enjoyment. For example, it has been found that appreciation is higher for rather somber movies that often depict death-related themes, and thereby

tap into questions of life's meaning. Such movies not only elicit negative emotions such as sadness, but also more complex affective states such as feelings of awe, elevation, or poignancy (Algoe & Haidt, 2009; Ernsner-Hershfield, Mikels, Sullivan, & Carstensen, 2008; Haidt, 2009; Oliver, Hartmann, & Woolley, 2012). Furthermore, such media content can also work as a reminder of mortality. Accordingly, Tsay, Krakowiak, and Oliver (2012) found that meaningful films indeed reminded viewers of mortality. More concrete, the sad affect elicited by such films is associated with death-related thoughts, whereas an elevating affect is associated with the feeling that life has meaning. Thus, death-related films seem to elicit not only sad affect and thoughts about life's transience, but also a feeling of elevation and a feeling that life has meaning, even in the face of death. Such films might, therefore, serve as a means of generating meaning and displaying a certain worldview and the values associated with it and, ultimately, serve as a means of coping with one's mortality by pointing out a more durable meaning or the presence of values that persist after one's death (Klimmt, 2011). A plethora of research examining the influence of death-related thoughts (i.e., mortality salience) on an individual's worldviews has repeatedly found that reminding people of the transience of life instigates a return to culturally grown worldviews, the standards and values of an individual's worldview, and the perception of the world as meaningful (so-called *anxiety buffers*; Burke, Martens, & Faucher, 2010;

Greenberg, Solomon, & Pyszczynski, 1997). It has furthermore been shown that these effects are moderated by a certain sense of meaning in one's life (Routledge & Juhl, 2010). In the context of media effects research, Goldenberg, Pyszczynski, Johnson, Greenberg, and Solomon (1999) argued that mortality salience may enhance enjoyment of a tragic novel. In a similar vein, Kneer, Hemme, and Bente (2011) found that media offerings – or in their case, so-called socioemotional advertisements – could serve as anxiety buffers, because such media content can induce feelings of relatedness and closeness. The questions arise of what effects mortality salience might have on more complex entertainment experiences (i.e., appreciation sensu Oliver & Bartsch, 2010), and how mortality salience and the search for meaning in life would interact affecting both appreciation and enjoyment that is conceptually different from appreciation (cf. Klimmt, 2011; Routledge & Juhl, 2010).

Therefore, the present study first explored the effects of mortality salience on experiences of enjoyment and appreciation of a meaningful film in order to further empirically strengthen the conceptual differences between appreciation and enjoyment. Second, the study examined the influence of the viewer's search for meaning in life on these outcomes.

## Appreciation and Meaningful Cinematic Experiences

To broaden the scope of the nature of entertainment experiences, Oliver and Bartsch (2010, 2011) presented the concept of appreciation. They argued that entertainment experiences should be conceptualized not only as mere pleasure and mirth, but also as leading to more profound feelings and deeper insights into human existence (Oliver & Bartsch, 2010, 2011; Oliver & Hartmann, 2010; Schramm & Wirth, 2008). Whereas the former conceptualization of entertainment is characterized as short-term hedonic enjoyment, the latter – appreciation – is defined as an “experiential state that is characterized by the perception of deeper meaning, the feeling of being moved, and the motivation to elaborate on thoughts and feelings inspired by the experience” (Oliver & Bartsch, 2010, p. 76). It is “characterized by a slower, more deliberative and interpretive process” (Oliver & Bartsch, 2010, p. 58). The notion of meaningfulness is central to the concept of appreciation (Klimmt, 2011). Appreciation is furthermore characterized as a state elicited by an engaging and meaningful film that taps into questions about human existence and the meaning of life (Oliver & Bartsch, 2010, 2011; Oliver & Hartmann, 2010). The concept of appreciation is thereby highly comparable to what Wirth et al. (2012) call eudaimonic entertainment experience.

In summary, questions of life and death and the perception of meaningfulness are central to the notion of appreciation. A suitable theoretical framework for further examining appreciation could be provided by terror

management theory because the interplay between death and meaning may be particularly powerful in generating appreciation or perceived meaningfulness of a film (Klimmt, 2011; Oliver & Hartmann, 2010).

## Terror Management Theory

Terror management theory (TMT) (e.g., Rosenblatt, Goldenberg, Solomon, Pyszczynski, & Lyon, 1989) posits that humans' cognitive capabilities lead not only to the perception of the world as meaningful (cf. Baumeister & Vohs, 2002), but also to the awareness of their physical vulnerability and ultimate mortality. This awareness of the inevitability of death in an animal that is programmed for self-preservation leads to a paralyzing terror (Greenberg et al., 1995). This terror must be managed if one is not to remain in a permanent state of anxiety. A great deal of research (for a review, see Burke et al., 2010) has shown that when people are reminded of their mortality, they use mainly two connected anxiety buffers. The first consists of a faith in a shared cultural worldview that imbues life with meaning and that sees it continuing to exist after one's death. Relying on a culturally grown worldview is considered a kind of symbolic immortality (Arndt & Vess, 2008). However, Simon, Arndt, Greenberg, Pyszczynski, and Solomon (1998) state that this cultural worldview is actually an individualized version of a cultural worldview; that is, every individual might have his or her own worldview, standards, and values, but these values are culturally determined. One's religion, for instance, is a good example of a worldview that is created to cope with life's transiency and that can take a more or less personalized shape.

The second anxiety buffer consists of self-esteem defined as the perception that one meets his or her own culture's values (Greenberg et al., 1997). These two anxiety buffers are so-called *distal* defense mechanisms that occur after a distraction (in the form of a distraction task or some filler items) from mortality salience. In contrast, *proximal* defenses deal with conscious thoughts of death by, for instance, pushing death into the distant future or just thinking about something else. Whereas proximal defenses are rational and conscious, distal defenses are experiential and rather unconscious (Pyszczynski, Greenberg, & Solomon, 1999).

To date, very few studies have applied the theoretical framework of TMT to entertainment research. According to Goldenberg et al. (1999), a tragedy functions as a means of vicariously experiencing one's own mortality. Surely, death-related films may remind viewers of their mortality, but those viewers are not forced to directly confront their *own* mortality. Accordingly, Greenberg, Pyszczynski, Solomon, Simon, and Breus (1994) showed that reminders of the mortality of another person also lead to worldview defense, but to a significantly lesser degree than reminders of one's own mortality. However, according to Goldenberg et al. (1999), tragedies are appealing and enjoyable because they enable people to reflect on their own death in a

relatively risk-free environment. The authors argue that watching a tragic film about death does not pose any danger to viewers and does not make their own mortality salient, because the character who dies in the movie is someone else. One might therefore conclude that a tragedy about another person's death is a form of a proximal anxiety buffer because the onlooker can push his or her own death away from himself or herself: It is the protagonist's mortality or mortality in general. However, Goldenberg et al. (1999) found no difference in enjoyment of a tragedy between participants who were reminded of their own mortality compared with the condition where participants were not reminded of their own mortality before reading. They only found a difference between mortality salience (i.e., the readers' own mortality that had been made salient before reading the respective story) in case of a nontragic story: Given a nontragic story, enjoyment was higher when the readers' own mortality had not been made salient before reading. Thus, Goldenberg et al. (1999) did not find evidence for their argument that a death-related tragedy increases enjoyment of that film after the viewer's own mortality has been made salient. Altogether, presented with a death-related film that also might remind viewers of death (even though not their own death), there is no clear picture of the effects of mortality salience (experimentally induced) on enjoyment. Therefore, the following research question (RQ1) was asked:

*Research Question 1 (RQ1):* What effect does mortality salience have on enjoyment of a death-related film?

In terms of appreciation, which is conceived as conceptually different from enjoyment (Oliver & Bartsch, 2010, 2011), it is argued that mortality salience increases appreciation of a tragedy (i.e., the perception of deeper meaning during and after film exposure) because such media offerings often show not only tragic events (such as the death of a character) but also the persistence of enduring values, and that life itself is meaningful. Thus, such films can serve as an anxiety buffer because they provide viewers with portrayals of life's meanings – even in the face of death. In other words, if viewers are reminded of their own mortality before viewing, they will have to manage the terror that is elicited by salience of their mortality. A film with a death-related theme where the protagonist acts in an exemplary and moral manner even if he or she dies – as in *Dancer in the Dark* or *The Green Mile* – can serve as a kind of coping with that terror because it provides the viewer with information that life itself has meaning and that there are values that extend beyond it. Accordingly, Oliver and Bartsch (2011) argue that it is more fruitful to characterize entertainment that elicits appreciation and not in terms of its tragic or sad nature, but in terms of meaningfulness. Thus, a sense that life has meaning even after one's death can be achieved by watching a tragic and meaningful film that focuses “to a greater extent on questions of human moral virtues” and “demonstrates such virtues (or ramifications of the lack thereof)” because such a film “teaches or inspires insight into these virtues, or it causes viewers to

contemplate them and what it means to live a ‘just’ or ‘true’ life” (Oliver & Bartsch, 2011, p. 31). Meaningful films that let viewers contemplate the meaning of life and human virtues that are still existent after one's death could serve as a coping mechanism by generating meaning. This argument is in line with Park and Folkman (1997; see also Thompson, 1985) who used the concept of meaning in the context of stress and coping. According to them, “meaning refers to perceptions of significance” (Park & Folkman, 1997, p. 116). In the terminology of TMT, meaningful movies providing onlookers with meaning can therefore be regarded as anxiety buffers; they allow viewers to focus on positive aspects of human life, despite its transience. As a result, in the case of mortality salience, meaningful films are expected to be particularly appreciated. Further evidence for this argument can be found in a study by Landau, Greenberg, Solomon, Pyszczynski, and Martens (2006), who could show that when mortality is salient, people dislike stimuli found to be meaningless. Therefore, the first hypothesis (H1) states the following:

*Hypothesis 1 (H1):* Mortality salience increases appreciation of a death-related and meaningful film.

## The Role of the Search for Meaning in Life

The *search* for meaning is defined as “the strength, intensity, and activity of people's desire and efforts to *establish and/or augment* their understanding of the meaning, significance, and purpose of their lives” (Steger, Kashdan, Sullivan, & Lorentz, 2008, p. 200, italics in original). The search for meaning has been regarded as an important dimension of human motivation and has been found to have a moderating role in different domains such as life-focused therapy (Steger, Kawabata, Shimai, & Otake, 2008) or life satisfaction (Steger, Oishi, & Kesebir, 2011). Steger et al. (2011) argue that search for meaning works like a schema, highlighting the attention paid to, and the importance of meaning in life-relevant information. The effects of mortality salience on perceived meaningfulness also vary according to the need or search for meaning (Routledge & Juhl, 2010). Routledge and Juhl (2010) show that mortality salience leads to a fear of death, but only in people who lack a certain meaning in life. Applied to a film exposure situation, one could argue, that search for meaning in life moderates the effect of mortality salience on appreciation. Oliver and Raney (2011), for instance, showed that the search for meaning in life was positively associated with eudaimonic motivations for entertainment use. Hedonic motivations where not associated with the search for meaning. Eudaimonic motivations (in contrast to hedonic motivations) are defined as motivations to seek entertainment that provides greater opportunities for introspection or insight into the meaning of life. Applied to a more outcome-oriented and not a motivational entertainment

construct – appreciation – it is plausible to assume that individuals who intensely search for meaning in their lives may find that information in a film about how to generate meaning is valuable to them. This, in turn, might lead to deeper introspection and elaboration on the themes of meaningful movies. Furthermore, drawing on the research of Routledge and Juhl (2010), it is highly plausible to assume that mortality salience does not affect appreciation in any case. According to Routledge and Juhl (2010), individuals who are not strongly in need of meaning are likely to be inoculated against the fear of death elicited by reminders of their mortality. Applied to appreciation of a meaningful film, one could argue that those who are not in search of meaning in their lives do not need the anxiety-buffering potential of a movie displaying wisdom and virtue, because they are not in a state of terror. Moreover, it could be assumed that they do not like to be urged to search for meaning as is the case once one's own mortality is made salient; this could dampen the effect of mortality salience on appreciation, for those who are not in search of meaning. This argument is reflected in the second hypothesis (H2):

*Hypothesis 2 (H2):* The search for meaning in life moderates the effects postulated in H1, such that mortality salience has a stronger effect on appreciation in individuals who are intensively searching for meaning in their lives, than it does on individuals who are not searching for meaning in life.

Concerning the effect of a search for meaning (and also its interaction with mortality salience) on enjoyment, there is no clear evidence to deduce a respective hypothesis. A search for meaning, for instance, was not associated with a hedonistic time perspective (Steger et al., 2008). Therefore, the following research question (RQ2) is asked:

*Research Question 2 (RQ2):* What effect does a search for meaning in life (in combination with mortality salience) have on enjoyment?

## Method

This study employed a factorial between-subjects design with mortality salience (versus control) as the experimental factor and the search for meaning in life as continuous moderator.

## Participants

A total of 63 undergraduate students at a public university participated. At the end of the questionnaire described below, we asked participants whether they had seriously followed the instructions. Three indicated that they had not followed the instructions. Thus they were excluded from the sample. The remaining sample consisted of

36 women and 24 men, aged 19–27 years ( $M = 21.65$ ,  $SD = 1.96$ ). Participants were given extra credit for their participation.

## Experimental Manipulation and Stimulus Material

Mortality salience was manipulated as in previous studies (e.g., Goldenberg et al., 1999; Greenberg, Simon, Pyszczynski, Solomon, & Chatel, 1992). Participants in the mortality salience condition ( $n = 28$ ) were asked two open-ended questions. Specifically, they were asked (1) to write about what they thought would happen to them after they had died, and (2) the emotions they had when thinking of their own death. Participants in the control group ( $n = 32$ ) were asked the same questions concerning watching television.

The stimulus was a shortened version of the film *My Life Without Me* (Spain, Canada, 2003, directed by Isabel Coixet, rated R). The length of the shortened version was 30 min 19 s (the length of the original film is 106 min). In a qualitative pretest, the film was shown to two students and two members of the department. It was thereby ensured that the film still had a coherent narrative in its shortened form.

The film tells the story of a 23-year-old mother who lives with her husband and her two small daughters in a trailer in her own mother's garden. Her life takes a dramatic turn when, during a medical check after a collapse, she learns that she has incurable metastatic ovarian cancer and that she is going to die within the next 2 months. She decides not to tell anyone about her imminent death. Instead, she begins to arrange for the life of her husband and her two daughters after she has died. She tries to find a new wife for her husband and a new mother for her children. At the end of the film, she records tapes for her husband and her mother telling them that she loves them. She also records tapes for her daughters, for each of their birthdays until they reach the age of 18.

The film was chosen as the stimulus because it depicts a likeable character who acts in an exemplary manner, even in the face of death. Therefore, the film provides a story for reflecting on the meaning of life, and serves as an example of honest and highly ethical actions on the part of the main character. Thus, ultimately, the film might serve as an anxiety buffer.

## Procedure

Each participant was welcomed and escorted to a carpeted laboratory, 21 × 15 feet in size. Participants were first asked to complete a preliminary personality questionnaire including demographic questions and the search-for-meaning-in-life scale (see below); the preliminary questionnaire contained some personality items not reported here. The mortality salience manipulation was delivered at the end of this preliminary questionnaire. After completion of the



preliminary questionnaire, all participants watched the stimulus movie in single sessions. Having watched the film, they filled in the second questionnaire containing the dependent variables. Then they were debriefed and dismissed.

## Measures

The search for meaning in life was measured using the Steger et al. (2006) search-for-meaning-in-life scale (e.g., "I am looking for something that makes my life feel meaningful";  $\alpha = .89$ ,  $M = 3.40$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ). Responses were obtained using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = *I do not agree at all*, to 5 = *I totally agree*. The search for meaning in life was assessed before stimulus presentation.

After stimulus presentation and after filling in some other items that were not part of the present study, the participants were assessed for appreciation and enjoyment with measures presented by Oliver and Bartsch (2010) for the measurement of *appreciation-moving/thought-provoking* experiences (three items, e.g., "I found this movie to be very meaningful"). *Lasting impression* was also measured with a scale provided by Oliver and Bartsch (2010) (three items, e.g., "The movie left me with a lasting impression"). Finally, *enjoyment* was measured with three items from the fun scale provided by Oliver and Bartsch (2010) (e.g., "I had a good time watching this movie"). Responses were obtained using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = *I do not agree at all*, to 5 = *I totally agree*. Oliver and Bartsch (2010) found enjoyment, appreciation moving/thought-provoking, and lasting impression to be three different latent constructs. However, their initial research was based on survey data about films the participants had seen. In that situation, a differentiation between appreciation *during* the respective film and the lasting impressions *after* that film made complete sense. However, in the case of a forced exposure situation such as the one in the present study, it is likely that appreciation and lasting impression form one factor, and enjoyment forms another. That is, if one measures lasting impressions immediately after exposure, talking about "lasting impression" might be just another way of expressing one's meaningful cinematic experience. To test this, we conducted a factor analysis with the *enjoyment* items, the *appreciation moving/thought-provoking* items, and the items of *lasting impression* using principal axis factoring with promax rotation ( $\kappa = 4$ ). The analysis revealed a two-factor solution. The items for *appreciation moving/thought-provoking* and *lasting impression* loaded on one factor (all loadings  $> .50$ ; eigenvalue: 3.78). Enjoyment formed the second factor (eigenvalue: 1.75). The two factors accounted for 69.10% of the total variance. Therefore, the items for *appreciation moving/thought-provoking* and *lasting impression* were combined in one scale ( $\alpha = .90$ ,  $M = 4.01$ ,  $SD = 0.70$ ). Also, the items for *enjoyment* were combined in one scale ( $\alpha = .86$ ,  $M = 2.92$ ,  $SD = 1.04$ ). Finally, participants were asked whether they already knew the film. None of the participants indicated having seen the stimulus film before.

## Results

RQ1 and RQ2 asked about the influence on enjoyment, of mortality salience and a search for meaning in life. To answer these research questions, a regression analysis was conducted using the MODPROBE macro (Hayes & Matthes, 2009). The macro allows for the identification of the direction and the significance of both the two independent variables and the independent variable's regression coefficient at different levels of the moderator (i.e., the complete range of values the moderator actually takes). Thus, using the macro, one is able to test for both main effects and interaction effects. Accordingly, the experimental condition (dummy coded: 0 = *control*, 1 = *mortality salience*) and the index of search for meaning in life were entered as independent variables. Before inclusion, the index for search for meaning in life was mean centered. The analysis revealed no main effect for either mortality salience ( $b = -.19$ ,  $t = -.699$ , *ns*) or search for meaning in life ( $b = .10$ ,  $t = .805$ , *ns*). The interaction effect between the two predictors was marginally significant ( $b = -.47$ ,  $t = -1.883$ ,  $p < .1$ ). The negative coefficient indicates that the experimental manipulation had a negative effect on enjoyment among participants rating highly for search for meaning in life. In other words, participants rating highly for search for meaning could enjoy the film if they were not reminded of their mortality. To get a better understanding of the interaction, the effect of mortality salience was plotted against values of the mean-centered moderator (see Figure 1). Using the Johnson-Neyman technique, one can detect so-called regions of significance (Hayes & Matthes, 2009, p. 928). These are values of the moderator variable where the effect of the focal predictor (in the present case, the experimental manipulation) is significant. The result is depicted in Figure 1.

H1 suggests that mortality salience increases appreciation. According to H2, the effect of mortality salience should be moderated by the search for meaning in life. To test these hypotheses, a regression analysis was conducted using the MODPROBE macro (Hayes & Matthes, 2009). The analysis revealed no main effect of

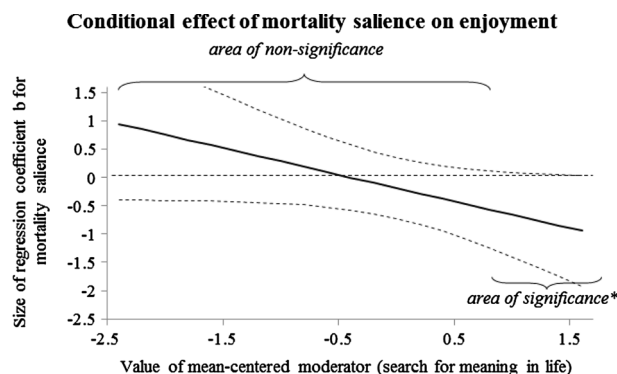


Figure 1. Size of the regression coefficient for mortality salience (0 = *control*; 1 = *mortality salience*; with 95% confidence interval) plotted against empirical values of the moderator (search for meaning in life). \* $p < .1$ .

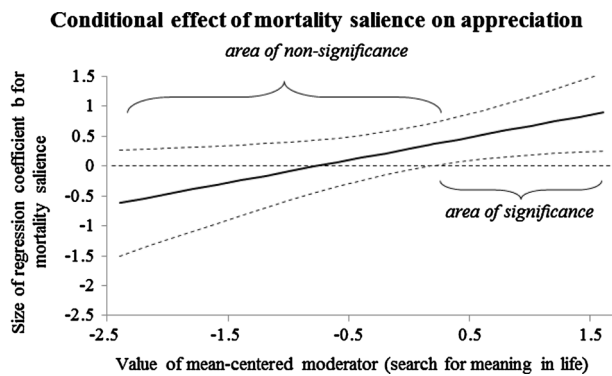


Figure 2. Size of the regression coefficient for mortality salience (0 = control; 1 = mortality salience; with 95% confidence interval) plotted against empirical values of the moderator (search for meaning in life).

the experimental condition ( $b = .28$ ,  $t = 1.587$ ,  $ns$ ) and no main effect of search for meaning in life ( $b = -.05$ ,  $t = -.648$ ,  $ns$ ). Thus, H1 had to be rejected. The interaction effect, however, was significant ( $b = .37$ ,  $t = 2.212$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The positive coefficient implies that the experimental manipulation was in effect among those participants who rated highly for search for meaning in their lives. As depicted in Figure 2, the effect of mortality salience on appreciation was only significant among participants who rated highly for search for meaning in their lives. Therefore, H2 could be confirmed.

Comparing Figures 1 and 2, a reverse pattern of results was found concerning the influence of mortality salience and meaning in life on enjoyment and appreciation, respectively. Whereas the influence of mortality salience among individuals rating highly for search for meaning in their lives was negative concerning enjoyment, it was positive concerning appreciation. However, one has to bear in mind that the effect on enjoyment was only marginally significant.

## Discussion

The overarching purpose of this research was to further examine the concepts of appreciation as conceptually distinct experience from enjoyment within the framework of TMT. Specifically, it was argued that reminders of one's own death should lead to increased appreciation of a movie that provides viewers with longer lasting meaning. From the perspective of TMT, death is an ongoing problem that has effects even when one is not consciously focused on one's own mortality (Pyszczynski et al., 1997). People defend against this death anxiety by relying on their values and on the idea that some valued aspect of themselves lives on after their own death. Research has shown that reminders of death can, finally, increase the perception of life as meaningful (Vess, Routledge, Landau, & Arndt, 2009). Cultural products such as death-related meaningful films seem to help people cope with the inevitability of death by providing them with an

opportunity to attach themselves to a larger framework of meaning (cf. Kneer et al., 2011). In other words, it seems that meaningful movies can serve as an anxiety buffer and therefore as a means of coping with one's own mortality and the terror that arises with it. From the perspective of Park and Folkman (1997), reminders of one's own mortality can be regarded as stressful events with which one might cope by generating meaning. This generation can be supported by a meaningful film such as the one used in the present study. In other words, a sad but meaningful film about questions of life and death, where the main character deals with her imminent death in an exemplary and virtuous manner, seems to be particularly suitable for viewers to cope with their own mortality. It was argued that a meaningful movie can serve as an anxiety buffer because it provides the viewer with meaning. This was, however, only the case for those who were already searching for meaning in their lives. This user trait indeed dampened the effect of mortality salience on appreciation. This result is in line with previous research on the moderating effect of a search for meaning in life (Routledge & Juhl, 2010; Steger et al., 2011).

The present study is the first to examine the concepts of appreciation and enjoyment in an experimental setting that allows for causal inferences, and thereby provides further insights into audience responses that are different from, and go beyond, mere fun. The results showed reversed effects of search for meaning and mortality salience on appreciation and enjoyment, respectively. Among participants rating highly for search for meaning in their lives, enjoyment was higher when their mortality was not salient. Even though the effect was only marginally significant, this finding could be interpreted as follows: Steger et al. (2008) found the search for meaning in life to be correlated with trait anxiety and also with absorption, which is defined as the openness to experience and the tendency to become involved in an experience (Tellegen & Atkinson, 1974). Furthermore, it has been shown that fear of death was heightened among those rating highly for search for meaning in their lives once mortality had been made salient (Routledge & Juhl, 2010). One could argue that if not put in a state of existential terror, those who rate highly for search for meaning in life have some capacities left to hedonically enjoy the film or may find some aspect of the film (e.g., the acting or the camera technique) enjoyable. However, this interpretation is highly speculative and needs some further examination. In any case, this reversed effect on enjoyment and appreciation could be regarded as further evidence of the discriminant validity of the constructs of appreciation and enjoyment (Campbell & Fiske, 1959; Oliver & Bartsch, 2010).

Further, the present study is a first step toward closing a research gap that has been mentioned by several entertainment scholars (Klimmt, 2011; Oliver & Hartmann, 2010; Oliver et al., 2012), namely the application of TMT to the experience of meaningfulness. It seems that sad movies should not only be regarded in terms of their tragic nature, but in terms of their meaningfulness or in terms of their potential to offer some solace and finally in terms of their gratifying potential (cf. Klimmt, 2011; Oliver et al., 2012).

## Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Despite its promising results, the present study also had limitations. First, data from the present study were based on a rather small sample size. Therefore the tests employed did not have much power. Future research should replicate the present study in order to strengthen the theoretical argument.

It is furthermore important to mention that the stimulus movie used in the present study also worked as a reminder of mortality. Although it was shown that individuals rating highly for search for meaning could have higher levels of appreciation once their own mortality was made salient, the present study somehow confounds experimentally induced mortality salience and mortality salience in the film. Furthermore, death-related dramas such as the one used in the present study are just one example of meaningful films. Future studies should examine the effects of mortality salience on appreciation and enjoyment of meaningful films without a death-related theme.

Another limitation of the present study is that it was not possible to differentiate between distal and proximal defense mechanisms. Most studies demonstrating the effect of mortality salience on distal defense mechanisms (i.e., worldview defenses or self-esteem; e.g., Greenberg et al., 1997) have invariably involved a delay and distraction between the mortality salience induction and the anxiety buffers. In the present study, subjects watched the movie immediately after the mortality salience induction. It was argued that a meaningful film might serve as a means of coping with the fear of death. Although the movie itself could have the effect of making mortality salient, the film could be regarded as a proximal anxiety buffer, in that it distracted participants from their own mortality and also provided a means to enhance meaning in life. Till et al. (2011), for instance, showed that death-related drama movies can serve as coping mechanisms and are linked to a rise in life satisfaction and a drop in suicidal tendencies. However, since no variable was measured to assess whether the film was used as an anxiety buffer, this argument remains speculative. In terms of appreciation of that film, it could, however, be argued that this experience is a form of favorable reaction toward the film and the depicted character, respectively. Such a favorable reaction toward one who upholds cultural values is usually conceived as a form of defense of the cultural anxiety buffer. This would mean that the film is a distal anxiety buffer. Altogether, the present study lacked a clear distinction between distal and proximal anxiety defenses. Future studies could test for both distal and proximal defense mechanisms by, for example, inserting a delay condition between mortality salience induction and the film.

Furthermore, this study did not examine the influence of the presence of meaning in life, on appreciation. The search for meaning is not necessarily the opposite of not having a meaning in life (cf. Steger et al., 2008). Related to that question, it would be interesting to examine the effects of a meaningful movie on the perception of life's meaning, and thus treat the latter as a dependent variable (cf. Simon et al., 1998).

Future research could also examine the behavioral motivations that might go along with appreciation, such as becoming a better person (Oliver et al., 2012). Regarding recent research by Oliver et al. (2012), who found that meaningful entertainment leads not only to elevating affect, but also to the moral motivations associated with it, future research could fruitfully explore the relationship of the anxiety-buffering potential of meaningful films for elevation and moral motivation or even for influencing behavior (see also Silvers & Haidt, 2008).

Finally, future research should examine the meaningfulness of films in more detail (cf. Klimmt, 2011): *How* do people perceive a film as meaningful and therefore appreciate it, and what exactly are the impressions that last? As mentioned above, meaning can have a very personalized shape (Simon et al., 1998). The qualitative research by Oliver and Hartmann (2010) offers some insights into the nature of meaningfulness of films. The authors found that meaningful films mainly encourage viewers to be more sensitive to valuable aspects of life because meaningful movies relate to people's life stories. These life stories vary, of course, from person to person. Another way to answer this question could be by investigating the effects of mortality salience on a highly comparable, but more differentiated, construct in entertainment research: eudaimonic entertainment experiences (Wirth et al., 2012). More precisely, one could examine the effects of mortality salience on the subconcepts of the eudaimonic entertainment experience, namely *purpose in life/self-acceptance, relatedness, autonomy, competence/personal growth, and activation of central values* (Wirth et al., 2012). Relatedness, for instance, which is defined as a close cognitive and affective affinity with a movie character (Wirth et al., 2012), could be triggered by death-related thoughts, since belongingness is assumed as a further anxiety buffer (Kneer, et al., 2011; Mikulincer, Florian, & Hirschberger, 2003). Furthermore, it would be interesting to explore the moderating influence on appreciation, of needs for autonomy, relatedness, and competence, as proposed by self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Tamborini et al., 2010).

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Matthias Hofer (MA) is a PhD student at the University of Zurich, Institute of Mass Communication and Media Research, in the section Media Psychology & Effects. His main research areas are media audiences and effects, entertainment and emotion research, media and psychophysiology, and the theories and methods of communication research.

Matthias Hofer  
Department of Media Psychology and Effects  
University of Zurich  
Andreasstr. 15  
8050 Zurich  
Switzerland  
Tel. +41 44 635-2063  
E-mail m.hofer@ipmz.uzh.ch

## Studie III

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## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

**Beyond Pleasure: Exploring the Eudaimonic Entertainment Experience**Werner Wirth<sup>1</sup>, Matthias Hofer<sup>1</sup>, & Holger Schramm<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup> Institute of Mass Communication and Media Research, University of Zurich, Switzerland<sup>2</sup> Department of Media and Business Communication, Institute of Human, Computer, and Media, University of Wurzburg, Germany

*We examine the notion of eudaimonic entertainment during exposure to a sad but meaningful movie, using a new measure consisting of 5 dimensions derived from research on positive psychology. We, thereby, transfer the conception of eudaimonic well-being to the conception of entertainment. Results of a confirmatory factor analysis show that the 5 dimensions can be further condensed into 2 second-order factors. We applied these new measures in a study in which the ending of a movie was manipulated (sad vs. happy). The results provide both discriminant and convergent validity and show that hedonic entertainment measures were affected by the manipulation, but that eudaimonic entertainment measures were unaffected. A second study provided further evidence for the validity of the construct.*

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Most communication scholars studying the entertainment experience define the concept in terms of pleasure, thrill, relaxation, diversion, and enjoyment (e.g., Bosshart & Macconi, 1998; Vorderer, Klimmt, & Ritterfeld, 2004). As Oliver and Bartsch (2011) note that the concepts of enjoyment and entertainment are closely related, and Vorderer et al. (2004) even conceive enjoyment to be the heart of the entertainment experience (also see Raney, 2003). In accordance with this hedonic view of entertainment, both disposition theory (Raney, 2003) and mood management theory (Zillmann, 1988) lay emphasis on the entertainment experience as positive affect and arousal (for a thorough review, see Oliver & Raney, 2011). However, these theories do not focus on the explanation of enjoyment of more moving and thought-provoking narratives, such as that of sad films or tragedies that often have a “[...] dreadful, disastrous, deplorable conclusion [...]” (Mills, 1993, p. 225).

In this article, we present an alternative conceptualization of the entertainment experience that goes beyond mere pleasure and enjoyment and is therefore applicable to sad, more poignant, and more meaningful media offerings. This conceptualization is based on research findings from positive psychology (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff, 1998; Waterman, 1993).

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Corresponding author: Matthias Hofer; e-mail: m.hofer@ipmz.uzh.ch

## Toward a conceptualization of eudaimonic entertainment

### Entertainment as appreciation/meaningful experiences

Recently, scholars started to broaden the notion of the entertainment experience, conceiving of it not only as pleasurable, but also as leading to more profound feelings of appreciation or as offering deeper insights into human existence (Oliver & Bartsch, 2010, 2011; Oliver & Hartmann, 2010; Schramm & Wirth, 2008). Most of these explanations point to the idea that the positive experiences arising during or after film exposure do so on account of the fact that one can learn something about life or personal development. In motivational terms, this idea is not new. In their research on movie gratification, Tesser, Millar, and Wu (1988) found that individuals attend to movies as a means (among others) of self-development. This motivation is associated with an interest in learning how others live, and in gaining insights into one's own life. The idea of self-development as a motivation for watching movies goes along with the idea that individuals use media as a means of developing their identity (Vorderer, Steen, & Chan, 2006; also see Frandsen, 2010). In a similar vein, Oliver and Bartsch (2010) present the concepts of *appreciation* and *meaningfulness*. Appreciation is "the perception of deeper meaning, the feeling of being moved, and the motivation to elaborate on thoughts and feelings inspired by the experience" (Oliver & Bartsch, 2010, p. 76); it is characterized as a rather slow and "more deliberative and interpretive process" (ibid., p. 58). In terms of associated affective responses, appreciation seems to go along with more serious or pensive states of complex and thus not clearly valenced blends. Similarly, Oliver (2008) found that so-called *tender affective states*, characterized by feelings of warmth, sympathy, and understanding, are associated with entertainment offerings featuring sad portrayals, drama, and human connections. The cognitive aspect of appreciation is characterized by deeper states of reasoning and contemplation. More recently, Oliver and Hartmann (2010) provided a closer look at the user experience of *appreciation* and *meaningfulness* during movie engagement. In their qualitative research, they found that films perceived as particularly meaningful seem to encourage sensitivity to the values of human existence, human relationships, and human virtue. Finally, meaningful experiences during the reception of sad movies or tragedies have a decidedly positive or uplifting connotation, despite the fact that these movies touch the more somber or cruel aspects of humanity (such as sickness and death). Thus, Oliver and Hartmann's (2010) observations fit well with the notion that entertainment provides a positive viewer experience. Furthermore, both meaningfulness and appreciation seem to comprise cognitive, affective, and also motivational aspects and should therefore be conceived as multidimensional.

### Entertainment as satisfaction of needs

In their recent discussion of the entertainment value of digital games, Vorderer and Ritterfeld (2009) associate appreciation with the satisfaction derived from the fulfillment of three higher order needs: autonomy, relatedness, and competence; these higher order needs are based on self-determination theory (SDT) (Ryan & Deci,



2000, 2001; Ryan, Huta, & Deci, 2008). Autonomy is defined as “a sense of choice and volition in the regulation of behavior” (Ryan et al., 2008, p. 153). Relatedness refers to “feeling connected to and cared about by others” (p. 153), and competence is defined as a “need for challenge and a feeling of effectance” (Ryan et al., 2006, p. 349). Recently, Tamborini et al. (2010) empirically tested the proposition that enjoyment during game play is caused by the fulfillment of higher order needs: In an experimental study, they examined how game controllers and social play context influence feelings of satisfaction of needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness that in turn lead to enjoyment. In their model, competence, relatedness, and autonomy explained 51% of the variance in enjoyment, indicating that enjoyment must to be conceptualized as more than mere pleasure (also see Ryan, Rigby, & Przybylski, 2006).

The recent conceptualizations of the entertainment experience as appreciation and meaningfulness (see Oliver & Bartsch, 2010, 2011; Oliver & Hartmann, 2010), and as the satisfaction of higher order intrinsic needs, as proposed by SDT (see Tamborini et al., 2010) rely on theories from positive psychology and well-being research (e.g., Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff, 1989; Waterman, 1993), a research tradition that distinguishes between two kinds of happiness or well-being: *eudaimonic* and *hedonic*.

The differentiation between hedonic and eudaimonic well-being is already well represented in the two-dimensional scale of eudaimonic–hedonic entertainment *motivation* proposed by Oliver and Raney (2011) who present evidence that, in addition to viewing movies for purposes of pleasure, fun, and suspense, individuals also turn to entertainment to receive greater insight into the meaning of human existence. Clearly, this distinction would also apply to experiences during and after the reception of a media offer. However, to our knowledge, there are no conceptual models of eudaimonic (vs. hedonic) entertainment experiences.

### **Hedonic versus eudaimonic well-being**

The concept of well-being refers to optimal psychological functioning (Ryan & Deci, 2001). In research on well-being and happiness, *hedonic well-being* and *eudaimonic well-being* represent two broad theoretical frameworks (Kahneman, Diener, & Schwarz, 2003; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff, 1998; Waterman, 1993). According to the hedonic view, well-being—often referred to as enjoyment, pleasure, or happiness—refers to the presence of positive and the absence of negative affect (Kahneman et al., 2003) and is felt whenever pleasant affect is accompanied by the short-term satisfaction derived from the fulfillment of needs; thus, hedonic well-being is *outcome-oriented* (Ryan & Deci, 2001).

In contrast to the hedonic perspective on well-being, *eudaimonic well-being* deals with human potentials and virtues. The term *eudaimonia* can be traced back to Hellenic philosophy. In Aristotle's *Nicomachean ethics* (Aristotle, Rowe, & Broadie, 2002), eudaimonia refers to the activities of expressing one's virtue (Waterman, 1993). According to Aristotle, true happiness is only found in the expression of these virtues (Ryan & Deci, 2001). That is, to be eudaimonically happy, one must live his

or her life in accordance with one's *daimon*, which is the true self (the potentialities and the realizations of each individual). According to Waterman (1993), who posits a rather broad understanding of the concept, eudaimonic well-being can be equated with personal expressiveness, the actualization of human potentials, and activities that are congruent with deeply held *values*. As compared with hedonic well-being, eudaimonic well-being is more *process-oriented*, meaning that it is more a way of life than an outcome of an action or experience.

Similarly, within the framework of SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2001; Ryan et al., 2008), eudaimonia is viewed as living well by pursuing intrinsically valued goals (i.e., goals that are valued for their own sake; so called, *first-order goals*) in an autonomous and mindful manner. More precisely, eudaimonia refers to actions that satisfy basic psychological needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy (Ryan et al., 2008).

### **Multidimensionality of eudaimonic well-being**

While acknowledging that eudaimonic well-being does not appear to have one single dimension and that treating it like this would lead to "a loss of valuable information" (Kashdan, Biswas-Diener, & King, 2008, p. 222), Ryff and Singer (2006) present a model of well-being that encompasses six distinct dimensions: autonomy, environmental mastery, positive relations with others, personal growth, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. The first three dimensions (autonomy, environmental mastery, and positive relations with others) are strongly comparable to the basic needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, as defined in SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2000). However, Ryan and Deci (2000) refer to basic needs, whereas Ryff (1989) (see also Ryff & Singer, 2006) describes the fulfillment of those basic needs. *Purpose in life* refers to beliefs that give one the feeling that his or her life is meaningful, and is directed toward certain goals. This dimension of eudaimonic well-being also includes being productive and creative, or achieving emotional integration (Ryff, 1989). The purpose-in-life dimension, therefore, draws on existential questions (Ryff & Singer, 2008). The dimension of *personal growth* (Ryff, 1989) refers to the development of one's potential and the expansion of one's abilities. Ryan et al. (2006) consider this dimension as an outcome of the fulfillment of the aforementioned basic needs. Furthermore, the dimension of personal growth comes closest to what Waterman (1993) refers to as *personal expressiveness*. Finally, an individual's sense of self-acceptance is related to the acceptance of multiple aspects of one's self, including both good and bad qualities (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

### **Eudaimonic entertainment experiences**

In summary, eudaimonic well-being seems to have a multidimensional structure (Ryff & Singer, 2006). Each of the dimensions identified in research on eudaimonic well-being points to a different aspect of positive functioning. However, there appear to be commonalities between some of the dimensions identified by different researchers. For instance, competence, as described by Ryan and Deci (2001), has a great deal in common with the environmental mastery dimension described by

Ryff and Singer (2006). The dimension autonomy can be found in both SDT and the research by Ryff and Singer (2006) (see also Ryff, 1989). Thus, one could argue that eudaimonic well-being basically consists of seven dimensions: *positive relations with others/relatedness, purpose or meaning in life, autonomy, environmental mastery/competence, self-acceptance, personal growth, and living according to central personal values*. The seventh dimension is not mentioned by either Ryff and colleagues (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Singer, 2006, 2008) or by Ryan and Deci (2001). It is, however, a crucial component of eudaimonic well-being (Waterman, 1993).

In this study, our aim was to apply these dimensions of eudaimonic well-being to media-viewing situations, thus treating them as experiences elicited by meaningful and poignant media offerings. However, the application required some adaptations. First, eudaimonic well-being is conceptualized as a process rather than an outcome. While the process might involve a lifetime of engagement, the act of watching a movie only takes a fractional amount of that time. Thus, we are dealing with events that have a duration which is much shorter than the overall process itself. Furthermore, although entertainment is an experience (Vorderer et al., 2004), and thus also a process, it can also be conceptualized as an outcome; that is, the outcome of having watched a movie that has activated certain thoughts and feelings. Finally, when adapting the seven dimensions found in research on eudaimonic well-being within a mediated message context, some dimensions must be collapsed (as demonstrated below).

#### *Activation of central values*

This dimension of eudaimonic entertainment is deduced from what Waterman (1993) calls “living in accordance with one’s central values.” As adapted within a mediated message-processing context, this dimension must be treated as an outcome of watching a meaningful or even a sad media offer. According to Oliver and Hartmann (2010), meaningful films often depict so-called life values that are in turn activated within the onlooker’s mind. That is, the multifaceted stories of characters of poignant and thought-provoking films make viewers aware of what is really important in life. In their qualitative research, Oliver and Hartmann (2010) found that the values most frequently mentioned were those describing human connections, especially as related to the themes of love, caring, and enduring interpersonal relationships, as well as to the importance of helping others. The activation of central values is strongly comparable to the emotional state of elevation mentioned by Algoe and Haidt (2009), which is elicited by observations of the virtuous and charitable acts of others, and is characterized as a positive emotional reaction to “human excellence” (Algoe & Haidt, 2009, p. 107). Finally, the activation of central values could also be interpreted as a vicarious experience of the values of characters depicted in a meaningful movie.

#### *Competence/personal growth*

This dimension of the eudaimonic entertainment experience combines two dimensions of eudaimonic well-being. First, it is important to understand that “[...] it is

not the absence of negative experiences or negative emotions that defines the good, well-lived, richly experienced life, but how challenges and difficulties are managed, responded to, dealt with, and transformed" (Ryff & Singer, 2004, p. 279). Such difficulties can take the shape of emotional challenges caused by a sad or tragic movie. Second, the challenges can be of a more cognitive nature if, for instance, the plot of the movie is particularly hard to follow (e.g., as in *Memento* or *Lost Highway*). Mastering these challenges can lead to feelings of competence and personal growth (see also Grodal, 2007). Thus, in a mediated message-processing context where eudaimonic entertainment is seen as an outcome a feeling of competence and a resulting feeling of personal growth collapse because if someone evaluates his or her experiences during and after the film the feeling of competence *during* watching the movie leads to a feeling of personal growth *during and after having* watched the movie. In terms of motivation, Tesser et al. (1988) found movie reception to be a means of self-development, and that the self-development motive was associated with a desire to experience strong emotions. In terms of the present process-based conceptualization, we could conceive of personal growth as a dimension of eudaimonic entertainment. Likewise, Vorderer (2001) suggested that entertainment can be considered as a "play," providing viewers with emotional and cognitive challenges. Mastering these challenges may ultimately help viewers cope with the challenges and difficulties in their own lives (also see Grodal, 2007). One can also argue that meaningful or even sad media offerings can confront the onlooker with emotional and/or cognitive challenges, and that mastering these challenges can lead to positive feelings associated with personal growth.

#### *Relatedness*

According to Ryan et al. (2008) relatedness "refers to feeling connected to [...] others" (p. 153) in a way that feels authentic and supportive. Empathy (Nathanson, 2003; Zillmann, 2006) is a comparable but discriminable concept. Whereas empathy explicitly includes the experience of the same or a similar emotion as that of the sender (Nathanson, 2003), relatedness means having a close cognitive and affective affinity to others, or in short, being very close to them. The underlying feeling of connectedness is also comparable to what Oliver (2008) calls "tender affective states," although these states are not presumed to have a specific target. According to Oliver, tender affective states might be used as an expression "to represent the feelings associated with human connectedness" (p. 44). Relatedness can have a specific target, namely the protagonist(s) of a movie, especially if the story depicts meaningful experiences or even misfortunes of the main character(s). Finally, the concept has some similarities with identification (Cohen, 2001). However, experiencing a sense of relatedness does not include that the onlooker forgets him/herself and feels like being identical with the character.

#### *Autonomy*

Autonomy refers to a sense of independence and self-determination (Ryff, 1989). In SDT, it concerns a sense of volition or willingness when doing a task (Ryan & Deci,

2000). In the context of digital games, Ryan et al. (2006) and Tamborini et al. (2010) were able to demonstrate that motion controllers can enhance feelings of autonomy during game play, which ultimately leads to an enjoyment of the game. This idea applies well in the context of digital gaming, because games offer actual possibilities for acting in autonomous ways, and thus satisfying the need for autonomy (Ryan et al., 2006). However, the principle of autonomy could also apply to the reception of somber and mournful movie portrayals (Tamborini et al., 2010), although in a rather indirect way. Movies often depict characters in poor or even life-threatening situations, and thus provide an opportunity for viewers to reflect on the fact that they are in charge of their own lives, and thus able to act autonomously. Thus, a sad or tragic film can also be eudaimonically beneficial in that it leads to feelings of autonomy and a sense of being in control of one's own life.

#### *Purpose in life/self-acceptance*

This dimension of the eudaimonic entertainment experience also combines two dimensions of eudaimonic well-being, related to the importance of one's goals in life and a sense of self-directedness (Ryff, 1989). According to Waterman (1993), a striving for excellence and perfection can give a direction and a purpose in life that, in turn, entails a sense of accepting one's self and one's life. These feelings may be activated by a serious or poignant movie. In motivational terms, Oliver and Raney (2011) suggest that individuals may choose such serious or poignant entertainment offerings because they allow them to reflect on the purpose of life. Examining convergent validity, they found that eudaimonic preferences were positively associated with both the search for, and the presence of, meaning in life (Steger, Frazier, Oishi, & Kaler, 2006). However, the correlation between the search-for-meaning and eudaimonic motivations was stronger than the correlation between presence-of-meaning and eudaimonic motivations. The authors interpret these differential patterns in the light of the fact that their measures of eudaimonia reflect rather a desire for an understanding of the meaning of life. However, in the present research, we are concerned not with a motivational, but with an outcome variable. Hence, the purpose-in-life dimension of eudaimonic entertainment means that reception of meaningful and/or sad and tragic movies can activate a belief that one's life has value, and can also lead to an enhanced acceptance of one's self and one's life. In a qualitative study of handball watchers, Frandsen (2010) provides compelling evidence that viewers connect what they observe to elements of their own lives and to their identities. Respondents in his study transferred observed game situations to situations that they were dealing with in everyday life, thus leading to a better acceptance of themselves. Taking these explorative findings into account, we conceive purpose in life/self-acceptance as a subdimension of the eudaimonic entertainment experience. However, the stimulus in the study of Frandsen (2010) was mediated sports. It provides, however, first insights about processes that also might be caused by sad or meaningful movies (Schramm & Wirth, 2010).

In summary, eudaimonic entertainment is, in our view, a multidimensional construct. However, some closing remarks are necessary concerning our application of eudaimonic well-being to the entertainment experience. First, it must be emphasized that we did not present a conceptualization of eudaimonic *motivations for entertainment consumptions*. This topic has already been thoroughly reviewed by Oliver and Raney (2011). Second, as stated above, we collapsed some of the dimensions found in research on eudaimonic well-being. Therefore, in our view the eudaimonic entertainment experience consists of five dimensions: *Purpose in life* was merged with *self-acceptance*, and *competence* was merged with *personal growth*. Finally, it must be mentioned that the analysis of eudaimonic entertainment encompasses an evaluation of both the process of reception and the media offer itself. That is, one has to conceptualize the experience of eudaimonic entertainment depends on both the stimulus and the onlooker's interaction with it.

On a more abstract level, the five dimensions of eudaimonic entertainment seem to comprise two general foci: an *evaluation of the viewing process* and an *evaluation of one's own life*. That is, the *activation of central values, competence/personal growth, and relatedness* are thoughts and feelings that rely heavily on the story line and the characters depicted in the media content. On the other hand, *autonomy* and *purpose in life/self-acceptance* represent feelings and thoughts which, although equally activated by the media content, activate reflections about one's self and one's life (also see Oliver & Raney, 2011).

## Study 1

The overarching purpose of this research was to develop and test a state scale of eudaimonic entertainment experience. According to Campbell and Fiske (1959), both convergent and discriminant validity must be established to explain a construct (also see Oliver & Raney, 2011; Tamborini et al., 2010). In the present context, one way to establish discriminant validity is to demonstrate that differences between hedonic and eudaimonic entertainment do exist. This can be achieved by an experimental manipulation that affects hedonic entertainment experiences but not eudaimonic entertainment experiences. Oliver (1993), for example, showed that the item of her Sad Film Scale that assesses "enjoyment of happy endings" was negatively associated with the scale, in general, indicating that the happy ending of a film may not explain viewers' enjoyment of poignant and meaningful entertainment experiences, and specifically the enjoyment of sad films. In an experimental study, Schramm and Wirth (2010) were able to show that sadness was greatest among participants who watched a sad-ending version of a stimulus film, and that enjoyment in this group was the lowest. Therefore, we posit that hedonic enjoyment is affected by the ending (sad vs. happy) of a movie.

H1: Viewers of a sad film without a happy ending feel less hedonic entertainment than do viewers of a sad film with a happy ending.

In contrast to the hedonic entertainment experience, the eudaimonic entertainment experience should not be affected by the ending of a movie because being eudaimonically entertained includes having more transcendent experiences and feelings of being autonomously in charge of one's own life. Furthermore, eudaimonic entertainment comprises the activation of central values that are often addressed in more tragic and poignant media offerings, and that are not expected to be affected only by the ending of a movie.

H2: The eudaimonic entertainment experiences of viewers of both versions of a film (happy vs. sad ending) do not differ.

The third hypothesis is based on research by Tesser et al. (1988), who found that the self-development motive for movie reception is associated with an interest in viewing films for the purpose of experiencing strong emotions. Oliver and Bartsch (2010) found that moving and thought-provoking experiences were associated with negative effect, such as fear and sadness, whereas pleasurable entertainment was associated with positive emotions. However, according to Oliver and Bartsch (2011), even though sadness might correlate with an appreciation experience, they note that it is neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition for appreciation. However, appreciation is a construct comparable to what we call eudaimonic entertainment. Furthermore, as we have pointed out, eudaimonic entertainment experiences could also go along with experiences of strong and challenging negative emotions that then lead to feelings of personal growth through the mastery of these emotional challenges. As Schaller (1993) points out, "feeling bad may reflect positively on the self" (p. 291). In terms of hedonic entertainment, the opposite should be the case because hedonic entertainment is usually positively associated with positive effect, such as pleasure and delight (Vorderer et al., 2004), and negatively associated with negative affect (Schramm & Wirth, 2010). A third hypothesis is therefore stated.

H3: Negative emotions during film exposure are positively associated with eudaimonic entertainment whereas they are negatively associated with hedonic entertainment.

Confirming H3 may also be regarded as a provision of convergent validity.

## Method

### *Participants*

A total of 88 undergraduate students at a public Swiss university (53 women; 35 men), aged 19–32 years ( $M = 22.01$ ,  $SD = 2.48$ ), participated in the study. Participants were given extra credit for their participation.

### *Design and stimulus manipulation*

This study employed a between-subjects design with the ending (happy ending vs. sad ending) as the experimental factor. A shortened version of the film *Hotel Rwanda* (USA, 2004, directed by Terry George, rated PG-13) was chosen as the stimulus. The shortened version had a length of 35 min (the original film has a length of

121 minutes). It was assumed that the film was particularly suitable for eliciting eudaimonic entertainment experiences because it appeared on a list (generated by research on films) of films particularly appreciated by viewers (Oliver & Bartsch, 2010). The film features hotel manager Paul Rusesabagina and his family, in a setting of civil war and genocide in Rwanda in 1994. It provides a story for reflection, with profound, poignant, and tear-jerking, but also fearful and sometimes even disgust-eliciting, moments. According to Oliver and Bartsch (2010), *Hotel Rwanda* is an example of a serious or meaningful film.

The experimental manipulation was intended to discriminate between two levels of sadness/distress. Therefore, we created one version with a happy ending, in which everyone was saved at the end, and one version with a sad ending, in which all the good guys died and all the bad guys escaped. The sad ending turns the film into a tragedy. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the two conditions.

### *Procedure*

Participants were given a brief written introduction to the main characters and essential events of the film, up to the point at which the film stimulus begins. Subsequently, each participant watched one of the two experimental versions of the film in single sessions. Viewings were on a large screen (1.65 m × 2.20 m) in a shaded carpeted room. After the stimulus presentation, participants completed an online questionnaire on a nearby computer, after which the participants were debriefed and dismissed.

### *Measures*

*Scale construction of eudaimonic–hedonic entertainment.* It was our aim to provide entertainment researchers with a short and practical scale to assess the eudaimonic entertainment experience. The first stage of the construction of items to measure hedonic and eudaimonic entertainment experiences, in the context of the different aspects of the eudaimonic entertainment experience presented above, involved the generation of 26 items. These 26 items came from different sources (the research team and students familiar with the concept of eudaimonic well-being). After intensive preliminary discussions during team meetings, we removed 11 items that were not completely in accordance with the theoretical considerations. The resulting scale consists of 15 items. Each aspect of eudaimonic entertainment was measured with three items, with instructions to participants to indicate how well each statement reflected their experience during the film, using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*I strongly disagree*) to 5 (*I strongly agree*). We obtained the following results. *Activation of central values* (e.g., “Precisely because the film was so distressing I had the feeling that the film delivered central values of life in an authentic way.”):  $\alpha = .692$ ,  $M = 3.61$ ,  $SD = .81$ . *Competence/personal growth* (e.g., “I have a good feeling because the emotions that I felt during the film challenged me in a positive way.”):  $\alpha = .777$ ,  $M = 3.25$ ,  $SD = .89$ . *Relatedness* (e.g., “It felt good to be captivated by the events around Paul and his family during the film.”):  $\alpha = .835$ ,  $M = 3.28$ ,



$SD = .88$ . *Purpose in life/self-acceptance* (e.g., "I have a good feeling because the film has shown me how content I can be with my own life."):  $\alpha = .846$ ,  $M = 2.73$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ . *Autonomy* (e.g., "It is good to recognize that my life is not in the hand corrupt generals."):  $\alpha = .732$ ,  $M = 3.11$ ,  $SD = .88$ .

*Hedonic entertainment.* A further three items were formulated to measure hedonic entertainment (e.g., "Altogether, it gave me pleasure to watch the movie."):  $\alpha = .860$ ,  $M = 2.67$ ,  $SD = .93$ . In addition, affective states arising during the film were assessed with 15 items from the Differential Emotion Scale (Izard, Dougherty, Bloxom, & Kotch, 1974). For each item, participants responded using a 5-point Likert scale to indicate how well the item described their feelings during the film, from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very strong*). An exploratory factor analysis was conducted using the promax rotation ( $\kappa = 4$ ) to reduce the items into subscales. After inspecting the eigenvalues, the scree plot and the item loadings on three items were removed due to low loadings ( $< .50$ ). Finally, three factors were extracted that explained 67.46% of the variance, with each item having high loadings on one factor ( $> .60$ ) and low loadings ( $< .40$ ) on the other factor. The first factor, labeled "sadness," included the items *sad*, *moved*, *unhappy*, *depressed*, *dejected*, and *grieved* ( $\alpha = .866$ ,  $M = 3.80$ ,  $SD = .76$ ); the second factor, labeled "joy," included the items *pleasure*, *amused*, and *exhilarated* ( $\alpha = .830$ ,  $M = 1.38$ ,  $SD = .63$ ); the third factor, labeled "anger," included the items *anger*, *worry*, and *enraged* ( $\alpha = .781$ ,  $M = 4.05$ ,  $SD = .77$ ). Lastly, the *empathic concern* subscale of Davis's (1983) Interpersonal Reactivity Index was measured using six items ( $\alpha = .711$ ,  $M = 3.80$ ,  $SD = .57$ ), and the *preference for melodramas and sad films* was measured with one item ( $M = 3.75$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ).

*Exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis of eudaimonic and hedonic entertainment experience.* A preliminary principal axis factor analysis with promax rotation ( $\kappa = 4$ ) resulted in two factors with eigenvalues  $> 1$  explaining 58.19% of the variance. Items of the following subdimensions loaded ( $> .50$ ) on the first factor (Eigenvalue 6.72): *competence/personal growth*, *activation of central values*, and *relatedness*. On the second factor (eigenvalue: 2.01), items of the subdimensions *autonomy* and *purpose in life/self-acceptance* had high loading ( $> .50$ ). However, because of three reasons we decided to perform a confirmatory factor analysis to validate the factor structure of the scales. First, the evidence of an exploratory factor analysis is generally rather weak. Second, confirmatory factor analyses allow comparing two or more different factor structures statistically (for example a lower order with a higher-order structure, Rindskopf & Rose, 1988). Third, the five subscales are theoretically deduced and show sufficient face validity, though their fine-grained theoretical differences cannot be established by means of an exploratory factor analysis.

Consequently, a confirmatory factor analysis with five factors was conducted. Bootstrapping was performed because of the relatively small sample size and the need to assess the stability of the parameter estimates with a higher degree of accuracy (Tomarken & Waller, 2005). The analysis, based on 5,000 bootstrap resamples, showed that the derived estimates and standard errors are valid approximations of the

population. The analysis revealed an adequate fit,  $\chi^2(137, N = 88) = 162.516, p < .1$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 1.186$ , CFI = .968, RMSEA = .046, PCLOSE = .571, SRMR = .053. However, inspection of the correlations among the five factors ( $p = .83-.99$ ) revealed the possibility of two second-order factors, suggesting that two highly correlated dimensions can be explained by one higher order construct (Rindskopf & Rose, 1988). The second-order factor model had a slightly better fit to the data than the first-order model,  $\chi^2(128, N = 88) = 144.993, p = .145$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 1.133$ , CFI = .976, RMSEA = .039, PCLOSE = .750, SRMR = .063. However, the  $\Delta\chi^2$  value showed that the second-order model did not substantively improve the model. On the other hand, the second-order model is a more parsimonious version of the first-order model (Rindskopf & Rose, 1988). Therefore, both factorial solutions were used to test the hypotheses. The first second-order factor explained the variance of the following first-order factors: *relatedness*, *central values*, and *personal growth*; we called this factor “deeper reflection” ( $\alpha = .890, M = 3.36, SD = .76$ ). The second second-order factor combined the factors *purpose in life/self-acceptance* and *autonomy*, which we called “life evaluation” ( $\alpha = .882, M = 2.92, SD = .89$ ). The former factor (“deeper reflection”) comprises items related to experiences arising while watching the movie, and the latter (“life evaluation”) comprises items related to evaluations of one’s life that were induced by the movie. Finally, the first-order factor “hedonic entertainment” ( $\alpha = .860, M = 2.67, SD = .93$ ) remained stable in both models. The two eudaimonic factors were correlated ( $r(86) = .61, p < .01$ ). Also, the factor “deeper reflection” was correlated with the hedonic entertainment experience factor ( $r(86) = .38, p < .05$ ). The correlation between hedonic entertainment and “life evaluation” was not significant ( $r(86) = .03, ns$ ).

## Results

The treatment check that was conducted to determine whether the experimental manipulation of the ending of the film was experienced as intended revealed that the negative ending was perceived as negative, whereas the positive ending was perceived as positive,  $\chi^2(1, N = 88) = 80.35, p < .001$ .

In H1, it was hypothesized that the ending of a film (sad vs. happy) affects hedonic entertainment. In H2, it was proposed that the ending of the film should not affect the eudaimonic entertainment experience. To test these hypotheses, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted with the experimental manipulation as the between-subjects factor. As Table 1 shows, the experimental manipulation affected the hedonic entertainment experience. However, neither dimension of the eudaimonic experience was affected. In terms of the second-order factor solution, there were also no significant differences between participants who watched the sad vs. happy ending in terms of either “deeper reflection” (happy ending:  $M = 3.31, SD = .75$ ; sad ending:  $M = 3.41, SD = .77, F < 1, ns$ ) or “life evaluation” (happy ending:  $M = 2.84, SD = .90$ ; sad ending:  $M = 3.02, SD = .88, F < 1, ns$ ). Thus, the first and second hypotheses were confirmed providing discriminant validity of the measures of the eudaimonic entertainment experience.

**Table 1** Mean Entertainment Experience as a Function of Film Ending (Study 1)

Audience Response	Film Ending	
	Happy Ending	Sad Ending
Purpose in life/self-acceptance	2.67 <sub>a</sub> (.15)	2.80 <sub>a</sub> (.15)
Autonomy	3.00 <sub>a</sub> (.13)	3.23 <sub>a</sub> (.14)
Competence/personal growth	3.27 <sub>a</sub> (.13)	3.22 <sub>a</sub> (.14)
Relatedness	3.27 <sub>a</sub> (.14)	3.29 <sub>a</sub> (.12)
Activation of central values	3.73 <sub>a</sub> (.12)	3.50 <sub>a</sub> (.12)
Hedonic entertainment	2.87 <sub>a</sub> (.15)	2.46 <sub>b</sub> (.12)

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. Within rows, means with no subscripts in common differ at  $p < .05$ .

H3 predicted that negative emotions experienced during the movie would be negatively associated with hedonic entertainment and positively associated with eudaimonic entertainment. Partial correlations (controlling for empathic concern and preferences for melodrama) between sadness, joy, and hedonic and eudaimonic entertainment were calculated. These analyses provided preliminary evidence for the validity of our measures. Hedonic entertainment was negatively associated with sadness ( $r(84) = -.21, p < .05$ ). Sadness was positively associated with *competence/personal growth* ( $r(84) = .30, p < .01$ ), *purpose in life/self-acceptance* ( $r(84) = .22, p < .05$ ), *relatedness* ( $r(84) = .23, p < .05$ ), and *activation of central values* ( $r(84) = .31, p < .01$ ). However, sadness was not significantly correlated with *autonomy* ( $r(84) = .14, ns$ ). In terms of the two second-order factors, sadness was positively associated with the factor that is more focused on the reception process of the film (*deeper reflection*) ( $r(84) = .31, p < .01$ ). Finally, there was a positive correlation between life evaluation and sadness ( $r(84) = .18, p < .10$ ). In the case of joy, there was a strong positive correlation between hedonic entertainment and joy ( $r(84) = .38, p < .001$ ), whereas joy did not correlate with either dimension of eudaimonic entertainment; thus, there was also no correlation between joy and the two second-order factors. Finally, concerning anger, there was a strong negative correlation with hedonic entertainment ( $r(84) = -.25, p < .05$ ) and again no correlation with either of the eudaimonic entertainment dimensions.

### Discussion

The results of this initial study found evidence for the eudaimonic entertainment experience. The experimental study provided both discriminant and convergent validity. That is, the five dimensions of eudaimonic entertainment were not affected by the manipulation of the ending of the movie, whereas hedonic entertainment was significantly lower in the sad-ending condition. A similar pattern was also observed in the case of the two second-order factors. In terms of hedonic entertainment, our results are consistent with disposition theory (e.g., Raney, 2006). In terms of

eudaimonic entertainment that comprises self-reflectiveness, deeper contemplation about the human condition and life's poignancies, it does not seem to be important whether a movie has a sad or a happy ending, but rather that the movie's plot portrays what life really should or could be like.

Furthermore, eudaimonic entertainment was positively correlated with sadness. This finding is in line with results by Oliver and Bartsch (2010) who found moving/thought-provoking experiences to be positively related to negatively valenced emotions. Unexpectedly, *autonomy* was not correlated with sadness. However, autonomy (i.e., a sense of being in charge of one's own life as a result of having watched a tragic movie) could also be interpreted as a result of a social downward comparison that is in turn not associated with negative affect (Mares & Cantor, 1992).

#### *The two second-order factors of eudaimonic entertainment*

Factor 1 ("deeper reflection") contained items of three constructs: *activation of central values*, *relatedness*, and *competence/personal growth*. This factor reflects an intense reaction to emotions elicited by, and values conveyed through, the plot of a movie and the characters depicted. These reactions also comprise a positive long-term feeling. This resembles, on the one hand, the concept of positive metaemotions (Bartsch et al., 2008; Oliver, 1993; Schramm & Wirth, 2010), and on the other hand, human values that are central aspects of human life (both positive and negative) that are depicted in meaningful movies. During movie watching, thoughts about those values and life issues may be activated during media reception, and thus lead to a feeling of personal growth by the mental act of facing the depicted difficulties and adversities that the characters in the movie must navigate. Furthermore, the first second-order factor includes the first-order factor *relatedness*, which is a feeling of connectedness with and caring for the character(s).

The second factor—*life evaluation*—comprises first-order factors that contain items about the meaning of the life of the viewer (subfactors: *purpose in life/self-acceptance* and *autonomy*). That is, watching the movie led participants to think about their own lives by comparing the fortunes of the characters in the movie with their own fates. This rumination about the movie watcher's own life can be compared to that of the protagonists of a sad movie, a process that eventually brings about a certain feeling of autonomy in life. Therefore, this factor (*life evaluation*) is comparable with what Mares and Cantor (1992) found: Negative portrayals of tragic characters may provide an opportunity for downward social comparisons. However, this could also be interpreted as the satisfaction of recovering dimensions of mastery and control (Reinecke, 2009; Reinecke, Klatt, & Krämer, 2011; also see Tamborini et al., 2010). It seems that media offerings cause feelings of self-determination and contentment with one's life.

## Study 2

The results of this initial study are promising. However, the study is based on a rather small sample. Furthermore, the experimental manipulation did not distinguish between different dimensions of the eudaimonic entertainment experience.

Therefore, a second study with a different stimulus film was conducted. The study had three goals. First, with new data it is possible to further examine the factor structure of eudaimonic entertainment. Second, since it is highly plausible that the experience is dependent on the specificity of the narrative as outlined above, a comparison between the two samples in terms of differences between dimensions of eudaimonic entertainment would refine our understanding of the multidimensionality of the experience. This follows the rationale that different films evoke different forms of eudaimonic entertainment. The third aim was to examine the relationship of eudaimonic entertainment experiences with the newly developed subscale of eudaimonic entertainment motivations by Oliver and Raney (2011).

## Method

### *Sample, stimulus, and procedure*

One hundred forty-five undergraduate students from a Swiss university ( $M_{\text{age}} = 21.94$ ;  $SD_{\text{age}} = 2.83$ ) were shown a shortened version of the film *Life is Beautiful* (Italy, 1997, directed by Roberto Benigni, rated PG-13). The film depicts a father's attempts to save his son's life in a concentration camp during World War II. It ends with the father's death and an uncertain future of his son. The film is a good example for the depiction of the values of life, human frailty and could also serve as an example of acting honestly and ethically (Algoe & Haidt, 2009; Oliver & Raney, 2011). Although both the films of study 1 and study 2 are basically sad and moving, some significant differences have to be emphasized. The main characters of *Hotel Rwanda* are forced to behave in a passive way. They have only a very small—if any—chance to modify their fate. In contrast the main character (the father) of *Life is Beautiful* was able to behave more actively and succeeded to hide his son from the Nazis. Therefore, it could be hypothesized that the eudaimonic dimension *activation of central values* should be higher for *Life is Beautiful* than for *Hotel Rwanda*. In contrast, *Hotel Rwanda* might stimulate more thoughts about the fortune of living in a peaceful country without genocide thus activating the dimension of autonomy (to be in charge of one's own life). All participants watched the same shortened version of the film in single sessions and then filled in the questionnaire. The shortened version had a duration of 35 min (the original film has a duration of 116 min). Because study 1 showed no difference between happy and sad end with regard to either eudaimonic dimension, the film was not manipulated.

### *Measures*

The first section of the questionnaire included eudaimonic motivations for entertainment use (Oliver & Raney, 2011, six items,  $\alpha = .828$ ,  $M = 3.91$ ,  $SD = .69$ ). Hedonic and eudaimonic entertainment experiences were assessed with the same scales and items as in the first study.

## Results

A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to examine the factor structure found in the initial study using bootstrapping strategies (5,000 samples). Analyzing the

first-order factor solution revealed an adequate fit,  $\chi^2(120, N = 145) = 152.541, p < .05$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 1.271$ , CFI = .964, RMSEA = .043, PCLOSE = .690, SRMR = .064. Also, analysis of the second-order model revealed an adequate fit,  $\chi^2(128, N = 145) = 128.171, p < .01$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 1.339$ , CFI = .953, RMSEA = .049, PCLOSE = .536, SRMR = .071. Moreover, the factor structure is the same as in study 1 (see Table 2 for items and  $\alpha$  values).

In order to compare the levels of the different dimensions of eudaimonic entertainment between the two film stimuli, a MANOVA was conducted with the stimulus films as quasi-experimental between-subject factor. The results showed differences in two of the eudaimonic dimensions autonomy ( $M_{\text{Hotel Rwanda}} = 3.11, SD_{\text{Hotel Rwanda}} = .88$ ;  $M_{\text{Life is Beautiful}} = 2.54, SD_{\text{Life is Beautiful}} = 1.05$ ;  $F(1, 233) = 19.17, p < .001, \eta^2 = .08$ ) and the activation of central values ( $M_{\text{Hotel Rwanda}} = 3.61, SD_{\text{Hotel Rwanda}} = .81$ ;  $M_{\text{Life is Beautiful}} = 3.80, SD_{\text{Life is Beautiful}} = 1.03$ ;  $F(1, 233) = 2.88, p < .1, \eta^2 = .01$ ).

Eudaimonic entertainment motivations was moderately positively correlated with relatedness ( $r(143) = .24, p < .01$ ) and personal growth ( $r(143) = .28, p < .01$ ), but not with any of the other eudaimonic dimensions. Concerning the two second-order factors of the eudaimonic entertainment experience, a positive correlation was found only between the deeper reflection and eudaimonic entertainment motivations ( $r(143) = .29, p < .001$ ).

## Discussion

The second study has replicated the factor structure found in study 1. Both, the second-order and the first-order factor model revealed an adequate fit. Eudaimonic entertainment motivations are correlated with some, but not all dimensions of the eudaimonic entertainment experiences, namely personal growth and relatedness.

As postulated, the comparison of the eudaimonic entertainment variables between the two films revealed differences in two dimensions of eudaimonic entertainment: *Autonomy* was higher in participants who watched *Hotel Rwanda* whereas the *activation of central values* was higher in participants who watched *Life is Beautiful*. It seems that the eudaimonic experience is dependent on the specific content at hand and the individual's interaction with it. While the drama in the confusion of a civil war seems exerts a greater influence on the onlooker's sense of appreciation of his/her own life, the father caring for his son's life in exceptional manner (as depicted in *Life is Beautiful*) has greater influence on the activation of central values. It has to be mentioned that strictly speaking, stimulus effects and sample effects are confounded within this analysis. In other words, the differences reported above could arise because two different samples are compared here. On the other hand, it could be argued that the two samples are similar in age ( $M_{\text{age\_sample1}} = 22.01, SD_{\text{age\_sample1}} = 2.48$ ;  $M_{\text{age\_sample2}} = 21.94, SD_{\text{age\_sample2}} = 2.83$ ) and education (all participants were undergraduate students). However, there might remain differences in terms of the distribution of personality factors in the two samples. Thus, the reported results should be treated with caution.

**Table 2** Items, Factors, and  $\alpha$ -Values of Eudaimonic/Hedonic Entertainment Experience<sup>a</sup>

First-Order Factor	$\alpha$ (Study 1)	$\alpha$ (Study 2)	Second-Order Factor	$\alpha$ (Study 1)	$\alpha$ (Study 2)	Items
Purpose in life/self-acceptance	.846	.814				1. I have a good feeling because the film has shown me how content I can be with my own life 2. I feel good because now that I have seen this film I recognize my life as fulfilled an meaningful 3. I feel good because this film has helped me to accept myself and my life
Autonomy	.732	.727	Life Evaluation	.882	.865	1. I feel good because now that I have seen this film I feel that I am in charge of my own life 2. The film leaves me in a good mood because I became aware of the fact that I am in charge of my own life 3. It is good to recognize that my life is not in the hand [Antagonist(s)] <sup>b</sup>
Competence/personal growth	.777	.690				1. I have a good feeling because the emotions that I felt during the film challenged me in a positive way 2. It felt good to expose myself to the theme of the film 3. I have a good feeling because the film has made me reflect on myself and my life.

Table 2 Continued

First-Order Factor	$\alpha$ (Study 1)	$\alpha$ (Study 2)	Second-Order Factor	$\alpha$ (Study 1)	$\alpha$ (Study 2)	Items
Relatedness	.835	.726	Deeper Reflection	.890	.828	1. It felt good to be captivated by the events around [Protagonist(s)] during the film 2. It felt good and right to feel empathy for [Protagonist(s)] 3. It felt good to feel compassion for [Protagonist(s)] during the film
Activation of central values	.692	.678				1. Precisely because the film was so distressing I had the feeling that the film delivered central values of life in an authentic way 2. Altogether, I feel good because [Protagonist(s)] acted in a responsible way 3. It makes me feel good to see that [Protagonist(s)] deal(s) with his/her life's trials and difficulties in an exemplary manner
Hedonic entertainment	.860	.741	—	—	—	1. Altogether, I felt well entertained watching the movie 2. Altogether it was fun watching the movie 3. Altogether, it gave me pleasure to watch the movie

Note: Items are numbered according to the first-order factors.

<sup>a</sup>The original scale was formulated in German. Both the German and the English items are available at <http://medienrezeption.ch/eudaimonichedonic-entertainment-experience-scale>.

<sup>b</sup>Note that this item might need some adaption in case that the misfortunes of the protagonist(s) are not personalized (e.g., when the protagonist(s) suffer/s from an illness or a natural disaster. In that case, the item should read as follows: "It is good to recognize that my life is not affected by adverse circumstances".



Following the third aim of study 2, positive correlations were found between two dimensions of the second-order factor that thoughts and feelings that rely heavily on the story line and the characters depicted in the media content. Other dimensions are not influenced by the eudaimonic motivation subscale. Obviously, the eudaimonic experience as it is conceptualized here goes beyond the more general eudaimonic motivation Oliver and Raney (2011) found. This can be interpreted as an indicator of the multidimensionality of the eudaimonic entertainment experience. Presumably, other predispositions not incorporated here might contribute to those dimensions of eudaimonic experience not correlated with the eudaimonic motivation subscale. Moreover, the results might be due to the different methods applied (in the studies here vs. Oliver & Raney, 2011). While surveys are very successful in finding general patterns of viewing motivations, experiments are more suited to detect specific interactions between personal and stimulus characteristics.

## Conclusion

The two present studies explicate the notion of the eudaimonic entertainment experience, and introduces a new short and practical scale to measure responses to more poignant and serious entertainment. The scale is suitable for assessing entertainment experiences that might occur while watching somber and mournful movies, as well as movies with sad endings. We deduced five dimensions of the eudaimonic entertainment experience from research on eudaimonic well-being, taking into account recent research on both meaningful experiences and appreciation (Bartsch & Oliver, 2011; Oliver & Bartsch, 2010, 2011; Oliver & Hartmann, 2010; Schramm & Wirth, 2008, 2010) and research on enjoyment as the satisfaction of intrinsic higher-order needs (Ryan et al., 2006; Tamborini et al., 2010). Confirmatory factor analysis revealed an acceptable fit for the 5-factor solution in study 1. However, very high correlations (.83–.99) between the primary factors indicated two second-order factors. The second-order model provided a marginally (although not significantly) better fit (a good fit) to the data. The two factors are further discussed below. In study 2, both the first- and the second-order factor structure revealed an acceptable fit.

Altogether, it seems that somber and sad movies activate not only cognitions about, but also positive evaluations of central issues not only in one's own life but also in the lives of depicted characters. This finding is highly consistent with the observations of Oliver and Hartmann (2010), that meaningful movies may encourage sensitivity to the values of human life.

However, one might ask what the benefits of a multidimensional approach to eudaimonic entertainment experience might be. First, a multidimensional conceptualization of eudaimonic entertainment taps different aspects of gratifications that may arise when watching a sad and/or meaningful movie. These gratifications are different from mere pleasure or arousal that is usually associated with hedonic entertainment (e.g., Zillmann, 1988). One benefit of a multidimensional conceptualization could

be found within research on therapeutic effects of entertainment media. A person suffering from a lack of relatedness and/or perceived meaning in life, for example, may experience a certain level of recovery after watching a sad and/or meaningful movie (Reinecke, 2009; Reinecke et al., 2011). A multidimensional conceptualization of the eudaimonic entertainment experience and the respective measurement can be useful to grasp the therapeutic success of entertainment media in a differentiated manner. Second, as the comparison between the two stimuli used in study 1 and study 2 has shown, different films may tap different dimensions of eudaimonic entertainment. This may lead to a more fine-grained differentiation of film genres. However, also comedies or thrillers might elicit eudaimonic entertainment experiences even though to a lesser extent. A multidimensional conceptualization might help to better understand the different 'eudaimonic potentials' of such films. Finally, the five dimensions can be regarded as an extension of the findings of Oliver and Bartsch (2010). Their factor *moving/thought provoking* provides a first and valuable conceptualization of user experiences that goes beyond mere enjoyment and pleasure.

### Limitations

We are aware of several limitations of the current research. First, our examination of measures of the eudaimonic entertainment experience is based on relatively small samples of college students. The replication of the results with a second study and the use of bootstrapping techniques can minimize this problem to a large though not absolute extent; however, future studies could employ measures in larger and more diverse samples. We believe, however, that our research represents exploratory stages in the development of an extended understanding of the entertainment experience. Together with what Oliver and Bartsch (2010) call appreciation and meaningfulness, the relatively young field of entertainment research has progressed a step further toward a more profound understanding of what constitutes entertainment.

Second, one might argue that the five dimensions we proposed are empirically too strongly correlated to be meaningful, and that only the second-order factor solution should be used in the analysis. However, this problem of strongly correlated variables is not uncommon in research on eudaimonic well-being (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Ideally, in our view, research on the experience of how media entertainment supports eudaimonic well-being should begin with a well-articulated theoretical framework, which is then operationalized and tested. In the present studies, the data also suggest both a 5- and a 2-factor solution.

Future research should apply all newly developed theoretical conceptualizations and measures of both hedonic and eudaimonic entertainment, as well as the appreciation and meaningfulness scale developed by Oliver and Bartsch (2010), to fully grasp the entertainment experiences of an individual (Oliver & Bartsch, 2010; Tamborini et al., 2010). Because serious, poignant, and pensive movies may also contain moments of fun and/or suspense, these aspects should also be taken into account. Moreover, one should not limit research to fictional entertainment but

expand it to other genres, such as documentary, historical, and artistic films (also see Oliver & Bartsch, 2010).

One interesting question concerns the identification of the moderators of the entertainment experience. Taking into account research on user traits as an explanation for the enjoyment of sad films would be an interesting expansion of research on the notions of eudaimonic entertainment. Furthermore, Oliver and Hartmann (2010) ask whether what people consider being meaningful in a movie changes across a life span. It would be interesting to apply our new measures to studies within different age groups, which probably have different character preferences due to their age identities (Mares & Sun, 2010). In addition, one must take into account previous life experiences, because these experiences might also explain differences in the eudaimonic entertainment experience.

It is our hope that our conceptualization and measures of eudaimonic entertainment experience will contribute to the further development of entertainment research.

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## Studie IV

### Bibliographischer Nachweis:

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

## Age Differences in Nonhedonic Entertainment Experiences

Matthias Hofer<sup>1</sup>, Mathias Alemand<sup>2</sup>, & Mike Martin<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Institute of Mass Communication and Media Research, University of Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland

<sup>2</sup> Institute of Psychology, University of Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland

*This article examines age differences in nonhedonic (eudaimonic) entertainment experiences. Results of an experimental study comparing younger adults aged 18 to 28 years (n = 84) with older adults aged 62 to 87 years (n = 65) who watched either a sad or a happy version of a meaningful film show that generally, older viewers reported higher levels of eudaimonic entertainment than younger participants. Furthermore, among older participants, eudaimonic entertainment experiences during the film were associated with positive affect and mixed emotions. This study further develops our understanding of nonhedonic entertainment experiences. Implications for other research areas are discussed.*

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Older adults typically value emotional goals, emotional meaningful relationships, and meaningful goals in life more than younger adults (Carstensen, Fung, & Charles, 2003; Carstensen, Isaacowitz, & Charles, 1999; Charles & Carstensen, 2010). Emotional, cognitive, and motivational development over the life span also manifest in both media selection and effects (Mares, Oliver, & Cantor, 2008; Mares & Sun, 2010; Mares & Woodard, 2006). Accordingly, recent research has begun to examine the development of entertainment motivations over the life span (Bartsch, 2012; Mares & Sun, 2010; Mares et al., 2008). Older adults, for instance, are more interested in contemplative and emotionally meaningful entertainment than younger adults. However, it is not only media preferences that change during a lifetime, but also the way older people experience mediated episodes. Yet, only very few studies have examined age differences in experiences during movie reception (but see Bartsch, 2012; Charles, 2005). Bartsch (2012) emphasizes the importance of understanding entertainment gratifications of older people, as this group is likely to spend a growing amount of time with entertainment media (Mares & Woodard, 2006). In addition, research has tended to overlook nonhedonic (so-called *eudaimonic*) types of entertainment experiences that are linked to perceptions of meaningfulness,

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Corresponding author: Matthias Hofer; e-mail: m.hofer@ipmz.uzh.ch

to contemplation about existential questions, to valuable and important aspects of life or the human condition (cf. Oliver & Bartsch, 2010; Oliver & Hartmann, 2010; Wirth, Hofer, & Schramm, 2012). Such experiences and the media offerings likely to elicit such feelings are a source of emotional and personal meaning that is especially valuable for older adults because they can help cope with the imminent end of life and thereby increase well-being. In two studies, Wirth et al. (2012) conceptually introduced and empirically tested the notion of eudaimonic entertainment experiences. The authors point out a need for additional studies that examine the role of moderator variables in eudaimonic entertainment such as age. Following Oliver and Hartmann (2010), they ask whether the strength of eudaimonic experiences changes across the life span. Similarly, Bartsch (2012) calls for a more “in-depth consideration of entertainment gratifications” (p. 605) of both younger and older adults in order to better understand the functions of entertainment media. Therefore, this study aims to extend recent research by examining the effects of age on these more complex, nonhedonic entertainment experiences, namely eudaimonic entertainment experiences. The study draws both on theories of adult emotional and social development (Arnett, 2007; Carstensen et al., 1999; Labouvie-Vief, 2003) and on theories of eudaimonic well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff & Singer, 2008; Waterman, 2008).

### Eudaimonia and eudaimonic entertainment experiences

The term *eudaimonia* has its root in Aristotelian philosophy and deals with human potentials and virtues and a life according to one's values and one's true potentials (Aristotle, Rowe, & Broadie, 2002; for a thorough review of the concept see Ryff & Singer, 2008). Positive psychology applied these concepts in order to grasp optimal human psychological functioning (cf. Kashdan, Biswas-Diener, & King, 2008). In order to capture key features of human well-being, Ryff (1989; see also Ryff & Keyes, 1995) presents a multidimensional model of eudaimonic (or psychological) well-being. Each dimension taps different aspects of positive psychological functioning. Relatedness, for instance, involves the strengths and delights derived from close contact with others (Ryff & Singer, 2008).

The notion of eudaimonia has also been applied within entertainment research. Oliver and Raney (2011) present evidence that movie selection is driven not only by pleasure-seeking concerns (or hedonic motivations), but also by a desire for deeper insight into human existence and meaningfulness (or eudaimonic motivations). From a process-based point of view, Oliver and Bartsch (2010) introduce the concept of *appreciation*, which is defined as “the perception of deeper meaning, the feeling of being moved, and the motivation to elaborate on thoughts and feelings inspired by the experience” (Oliver & Bartsch, 2010, p. 76). This nonhedonic gratification is conceptualized in terms of cognitive and mixed affective blends and associated with contemplativeness and reflectiveness. In a similar vein, Oliver and Hartmann (2010) provide a closer look at *meaningful cinematic experiences* that encourage sensitivity



to the values of human existence, human relationships, and human virtue. Finally, Wirth et al. (2012) introduced the notion of *eudaimonic entertainment experiences*—a concept highly comparable with appreciation and meaningful cinematic experiences. However, taking the aforementioned multidimensionality of eudaimonic well-being into account (e.g., Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff & Singer, 2006), Wirth et al. (2012) applied the notion of eudaimonic well-being to entertainment experiences that are beyond mere pleasure. They found eudaimonic entertainment experience to be a multidimensional construct consisting of five dimensions: (a) relatedness, (b) activation of central values, (c) competence/personal growth, (d) purpose in life/self-acceptance, and (e) autonomy.

During reception of a movie depicting the poignancies of human life, one might feel certain *relatedness* with the characters of the film. That is, it can be gratifying to feel connected with the depicted character. This state is comparable with what Oliver (2008) called tender affective states that are “associated with human connectedness” (p. 44), although these states do not have a specific target. According to Wirth et al. (2012), relatedness comprises close cognitive and affective affinity to others which, finally, is experienced as gratifying.

The second dimension, *activation of central values*, is characterized as a positive state that arises when the depicted story or a character’s actions meet the onlooker’s values. This dimension of eudaimonic entertainment is closely related to the emotional state of elevation—a positive emotional reaction to “human excellence” (Algoe & Haidt, 2009, p. 107). This emotional reaction can be based on an evaluation by so-called *moral modules* (harm/care, fairness, loyalty, authority, and purity, cf. Tamborini, 2011). We will discuss this below in more detail.

Besides activating central values, sad but meaningful films also elicit feelings of *competence/personal growth* (Tamborini et al., 2011; Wirth et al., 2012). These states occur whenever cognitive or emotional challenges imposed by a media offering are successfully mastered (Grodal, 2007). Besides competence/personal growth that is conceived as a process that is rather an evaluation of the reception process, an additional experience—*autonomy*—is conceived as a part of eudaimonic entertainment. Autonomy is rather the result of reflections on one’s own life in relation to the respective character’s life (Wirth et al., 2012). That is, one can experience a sense of volition and willingness leading his or her own life compared to the arduous or even life-threatening situation of a character.

Similarly, the dimension purpose in *life/self-acceptance* also is closer to the onlooker’s life although it is elicited by the respective meaningful film. More precisely, meaningful films can lead to the conviction that one’s own life (compared to the life of a character of a film) or life in general has value; this belief, in turn, is likely to lead to an enhanced acceptance of oneself (for a discussion of the five dimensions, cf. Wirth et al., 2012).

It has to be mentioned that eudaimonic entertainment is conceived as an experience that is elicited by a media offering and the onlooker’s interaction with it. It encompasses both an evaluation of the life of the depicted character and an

evaluation of one's own life in relation with the character's life (Wirth et al., 2012). Thus, both properties of the stimulus and also properties of the viewer play a major role in determining the experience.

### Age differences in emotional experiences and entertainment

Theory and research are inconsistent with respect to age differences in eudaimonic versus hedonistic emotional experiences. Support for age-related increases in eudaimonic emotional experiences comes from the *socioemotional selectivity theory* (SST; Carstensen et al., 1999, 2003; Charles & Carstensen, 2010). Briefly, this theory assumes that older age is inextricably linked to an increased focus on emotional goals and information (Carstensen et al., 2003). With older age, more present-oriented goals (i.e., emotional meaning and antecedent-focused emotion regulation) become more important, as the conclusion of the appraisal process is that time is limited (Carstensen et al., 1999). People approaching the ultimate ending (i.e., death) are searching for existential meaning in life and focus more on complex and meaningful positive experiences (Carstensen, Pasupathi, Mayr, & Nesselroade, 2000). Additionally, SST also suggests that with older age the appreciation of life as a fragile gift as well as the importance of close social relationships and life satisfaction increase (Carstensen et al., 1999). Also, older people pay more attention to positive than to negative information either with hindsight or with regard to the moment (the so-called *positivity effect*; Mather & Carstensen, 2005; Urry & Gross, 2010). In contrast, in younger people, whose future is relatively expansive, more future-oriented goals such as information-seeking are important. As a result, younger adults exhibit more exploratory behaviors that also may entail negative emotions or even risky behavior (Arnett, 2007).

In contrast, the *dynamic integration theory* (DIT; Labouvie-Vief, 2003; Labouvie-Vief & Medler, 2002) predicts age-related increases in hedonic emotional experiences. This theory suggests that older adults—despite a decline of adaptive abilities, such as deteriorating health or declining cognitive abilities—are better able to optimize their affect, that is, to enhance positive emotions and to dampen negative emotions. As a result, older adults maintain levels of hedonic well-being that are similar to or even higher than those of younger adults. Thus, DIT regards older adults as hedonically motivated emotion optimizers (Labouvie-Vief & Medler, 2002).

In summary, SST and DIT are somewhat contradictory in their prediction of emotional complexity in old age and eudaimonic and hedonic experiences, respectively. Whereas the former treat older adults as rather eudaimonically motivated, the latter conceived them as rather hedonistic. However, research in entertainment preferences seems to favor the perspective of the SST. Oliver and Raney (2011), for instance, did find modest increases in eudaimonic motivations with increasing age. Similarly, Mares et al. (2008) found that, compared to middle-aged and younger participants, older people showed significantly higher preferences for heartwarming and emotional films whereas younger people preferred funny (i.e., comedies),

sad, and dark films. In a recent study by Bartsch (2012), older adults were more motivated to seek entertainment gratifications that are related to social and emotional meaningfulness and contemplativeness than younger adults. Within older viewers, contemplative gratifications were the most important aspects whereas fear- and sadness-related gratifications were least important.

### Meaningful cinematic experiences

A central feature of films that provide the aforementioned contemplative gratifications is their potential to provide *meaning* or simply their *meaningfulness*. However, one might argue that the terms meaning and meaningfulness are not yet well defined in entertainment research. There are several definitions of the word “meaning” (Park & Folkman, 1996). On the most basic level, meaning is the connection between at least two entities that is established not on the basis of the entities themselves, but by the perceiving mind (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002). However, this rather basic definition of meaning does not necessarily come to mind when one considers *meaningfulness*. Park and Folkman (1996) used the concept of meaning in the context of stress and coping: According to the authors, “[...] meaning refers to perceptions of significance” (p. 116). They distinguish between two levels of meaning: *global meaning*, defined as a person’s “basic goals and fundamental assumptions, beliefs, and expectations about the world” (p. 116) and *situational meaning*, which is “[...] the meaning that is formed in the interaction between a person’s global meaning and the circumstances of a particular person-environment transaction” (p. 116). According to Baumeister (1991; also see Baumeister & Vohs, 2002) meaning is contingent upon the satisfaction of four needs. The first is a need for purpose; people want to interpret events as being purposive. The second is a need for value and justification. The third is a need for efficacy. The fourth is a need for self-worth. Extending this framework, Baumeister and Leary (1995) mention the need to belong. These five needs correspond well with the five aforementioned dimensions of eudaimonic entertainment. Satisfying all those needs finally leads to perceived meaning that can also be achieved by watching a meaningful film, if the film focuses “[...] to a greater extent on questions of human moral virtues, it demonstrates such virtues (or ramifications of the lack thereof), it teaches or inspires insight into these virtues, or it causes viewers to contemplate them and what it means to live a ‘just’ or ‘true’ life” (Oliver & Bartsch, 2011, p. 31). Thus, meaningful entertainment offerings can teach onlookers about culturally grown values, about the importance of human relationships or inner beauty, and ultimately about the meaning of life. As a result, viewers undergo so-called *meaningful cinematic experiences* (Oliver & Hartmann, 2010). These experiences occur whenever onlookers can make connections between their own lives and the lives of the depicted characters or the portrayed situations. These connections can be made on multiple dimensions. A viewer may, for instance, compare one’s own autonomously led life with the life of a certain character or feel a certain connection with this character. A multidimensional conceptualization of eudaimonic entertainment can grasp these connections in a

detailed manner. Taking these considerations and the abovementioned results of life span developmental studies into account, one might argue that because older adults are more interested in meaningful experiences than younger adults (cf. Bartsch, 2012; Mares et al., 2008) older adults also experience higher levels of eudaimonic entertainment. Therefore, we hypothesize that given a meaningful film, older adults experience higher levels of eudaimonic entertainment than younger adults (H1).

### **Age differences in multidimensional eudaimonic entertainment**

Relatedness is both the need and the feeling of being connected with and loved by other people (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). According to SST, the need for social relatedness increases with age. Therefore, older adults, in consonance with their focus on emotionally meaningful goals, prioritize the maintenance of high-quality relationships (Carstensen et al., 2003). Applied to media exposure situations, relatedness means the feeling of being connected with the character(s) of a film that often goes along with so-called tender affective states (Oliver, 2008; Wirth et al., 2012). Thus, given a meaningful film, older adults are more likely to experience this dimension of eudaimonic entertainment than younger adults. That is, the higher need for meaningful connectedness among older adults could also manifest itself in a mediated context. Furthermore, there is evidence that older age is associated with shifts in affiliative emotions and greater concern for others (Richter & Kunzmann, 2011; Sze, Gyurak, Goodkind, & Levenson, 2012). Therefore, we assume that older adults feel more connected to the character in a meaningful film and thus report higher levels of relatedness with that character than younger adults (H2).

According to Oliver and Hartmann (2010), meaningful films often depict central values of life or what it means to lead a good life in accordance with one's values and ultimately how life should be (Waterman, 2008). Such values may consist of moral behaviors exerted by the character of a film that in turn activate certain values in the onlooker. Tamborini (2011) suggested a similar idea, arguing that character actions are evaluated on five different *moral modules* (harm/care, fairness, loyalty, authority, and purity). These modules are considered as "innate, synaptic connections" and "combine past experiences and emotion" (Tamborini, 2011, p. 40). Consequently, in most cases, these modules are activated in an automatic and intuitive rather than in a rational and effortful manner (Haidt, 2001). A character exerting or a story portraying moral behavior may activate these moral modules and, finally, encourage viewers to contemplate life's meaning and inspire insight (cf. Tamborini, 2011). Furthermore, research has shown that values and orientations, such as family values, are more stable and more pronounced in older age (e.g., Blanchard-Fields, Hertzog, Stein, & Pak, 2001).

Another line of research repeatedly found that whereas fluid intelligence (i.e., the capacity to solve problems in novel situations or think logically) tends to decrease as age increases, crystalline intelligence (i.e. knowledge structures acquired over life time) tends to increase with age (e.g., Lindenberger, Mayr, & Kliegl, 1993). Thus,

one might assume that among older individuals, the development of moral modules that are also part of one's knowledge structures is more pronounced and also more stable than among younger individuals. Therefore, we assume that given a cinematic portrayal that delivers central human values such as fairness, loyalty, or purity, older viewers experience the activation of central values to a greater extent than younger viewers (H3).

The dimension competence/personal growth of eudaimonic entertainment combines two dimensions of eudaimonic well-being, namely competence and personal growth. Research in eudaimonic well-being has shown that with older age, the experience of personal growth is decreasing (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Singer, 2008). There is also evidence that the mental and physical changes associated with aging lead to a feeling of incompetence and reduced self-determination (Vallerand, O'Connor, & Hamel, 1995). On the other hand, given their increased ability to adapt their goals, older adults are likely to exert similar or even higher levels of perceived competence than younger adults (Carstensen *et al.*, 2003). Moreover, in terms of eudaimonic entertainment, one has to take into account the mediated nature of the experience. Vorderer (2001), for instance, suggested that entertainment could be conceived as play providing viewers with experiences that ultimately help them to cope with the difficulties and challenges of their own lives (*cf.* Bauer, McAdams, & Pals, 2008). Accordingly, media exposure has been shown to have mood repairing and recreational effects (Reinecke *et al.*, 2012). Thus, we assume that older adults, compared to younger adults, experience higher levels of competence/personal growth (H4).

Fourth, the dimension purpose in life/self-acceptance is defined as the activation of a belief that compared with a character of a sad, but meaningful film, one's life has value. It has been repeatedly shown that self-acceptance increases with age (Erikson, 1980; Ryff & Singer, 2008). At the same time, SST posits that a sense of limited time leads to a need for a deeper meaning in life (Charles & Carstensen, 2010) and a tendency to remember more positive than negative and more emotionally meaningful events in their life than younger adults do (Carstensen *et al.*, 2003; Mather & Carstensen, 2005). Therefore, it is suggestive to assume that given a poignant but meaningful film, this dimension of eudaimonic entertainment is more pronounced in older than in younger adults. Furthermore, it could also be interpreted as a social downward comparison with the respective film character (Mares & Cantor, 1992; Wirth *et al.*, 2012). According to Carstensen *et al.* (2003), older adults engage more in downward than upward social comparison. Therefore, we hypothesize that older viewers experience purpose in life/self-acceptance to a greater extent than younger viewers (H5).

Finally, a similar argument applies to the eudaimonic entertainment dimension of autonomy: In motivational terms, the need for autonomy is a central aspect of people's well-being (Kasser & Ryan, 1999; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff, 1989). The fulfillment of this need is especially salient for elderly people (Kasser & Ryan, 1999; Langer & Rodin, 1976). However, in terms of eudaimonic entertainment, autonomy is conceived as a feeling of being in charge of one's own life compared to the character

of a poignant movie (Wirth et al., 2012). Taking the *positivity effect* into account (i.e., a strategic process that leads older people to experience or to focus on more positive and fewer negative emotions and memories than younger adults; Mather & Carstensen, 2005), we argue that this positivity bias also exists during or after media exposure. In other words, older people should report more perceived autonomy than a younger comparison group after having watched a movie where the character is not well. This argument is in line with the fact that older people tend to engage more in downward than in upward comparison that, in turn, serves emotion regulation and ultimately a feeling of control (Heckhausen & Schulz, 1995). Therefore, we hypothesize that given a sad but meaningful film where the protagonist suffers, older adults experience higher levels of autonomy than younger adults do (H6).

Sad but meaningful films often elicit sadness but also mixed emotional experience. One example of such mixed-affect—the emotional state of poignancy—“results from appreciating the fragility of life” (Ersner-Hershfield, Mikels, Sullivan, & Carstensen, 2008, p. 159). Oliver and Raney (2011) could show that eudaimonic film preferences that entail motivations for deeper insights and contemplations of life profundities were associated with poignancy. Along with older persons’ higher need for meaningful emotional experiences and also with their improved ability to integrate both negative and positive experiences into their lives (also during viewing situations), this relationship should be stronger with increasing age. Thus, the association between dimensions of eudaimonic entertainment and mixed-affect are stronger among older people than among younger people. (H7).

### The role of film endings

As mentioned above, eudaimonic entertainment is considered as resulting from both properties of the stimulus and the onlooker’s interaction with it. Thus, stimulus properties might also contribute to an increase or a decrease in eudaimonic entertainment. However, Wirth et al. (2012) found no differences in neither subdimension with regard to the ending (happy end vs. sad end) of the stimulus. One reason for this might be that the two experimental groups were fairly homogenous with regard to age. The film’s ending might have different effects on eudaimonic entertainment in terms of different age groups.

Appreciation of a narrative is increased by desirability and justness of its resolution. Affective disposition theory (ADT) states that, if liked characters who behave morally are benefited, positive affect increases. Conversely, whereas negative affect like sadness or distress should increase if liked characters are punished (Zillmann & Cantor, 1977). Accordingly, several studies have shown that sadness was most pronounced when the film had a negative ending (e.g., Hofer & Wirth, 2012; Zillmann & Cantor, 1977). As mentioned above, older people pursue emotional meaningful goals to a greater extent than younger adults and they are less interested in seeking tear-jerking entertainment than younger adults (cf. Bartsch, 2012; Mares et al., 2008). Also, it has been shown that older adults are more interested in experiencing positive than negative affect. Therefore, one might conclude that the effect of a sad in contrast

to a happy ending has a different effect on eudaimonic entertainment experiences among older compared to younger viewers. Concerning the dimension activation of central values the following effect can be assumed concerning older participants: Meaningful and poignant movies often depict sad stories where characters suffer from a burdensome life throughout the plot. A happy ending where the character did not suffer for nothing may meet especially older adults' values and therefore lead to higher eudaimonic entertainment than a sad ending. In a similar vein, a happy ending may also be perceived as more meaningful to older adults. For instance, an ending where the character dies makes the imminent death more salient to older adults. Therefore, we hypothesize that the film ending has an effect on all dimensions of eudaimonic entertainment among older adults, but not among younger adults (H8).

## Method

### Participants

Eighty-four younger participants (66 women, 18 men) aged 18–28 years ( $M = 20.96$ ,  $SD = 1.96$ ) and 65 older participants (30 women, 35 men) aged 62–87 years ( $M = 72.52$ ,  $SD = 6.90$ ) took part in the study. The younger participants were undergraduate communication students at a large Swiss university. They received course credit for participation. The sample of older participants was drawn from the local community. These participants were recruited from a participant pool. Most of the older participants regularly visited courses at the senior university. Thus, the two samples were fairly homogenous concerning education, or more precisely, their general interest in scientific knowledge.

### Design and stimulus material

The study employed a 2 (age group)  $\times$  2 (sad end vs. happy end) between-subjects design. A shortened version of the film *Dancer in the Dark* (USA, 2000, directed by Lars von Trier, rated PG-13) was used as stimulus. The film, set in Washington State in 1964, features the Czech immigrant Selma Jeřková (played by the Icelandic singer Björk). Selma has moved to the United States with her son Gene. She works in a local factory and lives a life in poverty in a mobile trailer on the property of town policeman Bill Houston and his wife Linda. She suffers from a hereditary degenerative disease diminishing her eyesight gradually and inexorably. Gene also suffers from this disease. In order to pay an operation that will prevent her son from suffering the same fate, she saves up every penny she earns in a tin cup in her kitchen. One day, Bill reveals to Selma that he is financially broke and cannot bear to tell his wife. Furthermore, Bill steals Selma's life savings that were meant for Gene's operation. When Selma finds out about the theft, she confronts Bill. The situation gets out of hand and Selma shoots him. Therefore, Selma is put on trial. She is sentenced to death by hanging. Yet, Selma refuses help as this would lead her life savings to be spent on her lawyer and not on Gene's operation. The film was chosen as stimulus

because it features a highly likeable character who acts in an exemplary manner and for whom a positive ending is likely to be desired.

The plot was introduced to the viewers through a prefix. This consisted of the storyline illustrated with pictures of the protagonists. The film stimulus had a duration of 30 minutes. Two endings were created which were also introduced with textual information presented on the screen in a cinematic manner (white characters on black background). The textual information was enriched with pictures of the respective character.

### Experimental manipulation

One experimental group was informed that Selma was not hung at the end and that her son received the appropriate treatment (happy end;  $n_{\text{older}} = 30$ ,  $n_{\text{younger}} = 43$ ). The sad end group ( $n_{\text{older}} = 35$ ,  $n_{\text{younger}} = 41$ ) was informed that she was hung and that her son has gone blind (see Appendix A for detailed film endings). Participants were randomly assigned to one of the two experimental conditions.

### Procedure

Upon arrival, each participant was welcomed and escorted to a carpeted laboratory, 21 × 15 feet in size. Participants were first asked to complete a preliminary personality questionnaire including demographic questions. After completion of the questionnaire, participants were randomly assigned to one of the two experimental groups. Then, they watched the stimulus movie in single sessions. Having watched the film, they filled out the second questionnaire containing the dependent variables. Finally, participants were asked whether they had already seen the movie. None of participants indicated they had seen the film before or were familiar with the plot. After completion, they were debriefed and dismissed.

### Measures

*Eudaimonic entertainment experiences* were measured with items of the Eudaimonic-Experience Scale (EES; Wirth et al., 2012). Each dimension of eudaimonic entertainment was measured with three items. Participants could indicate how well each statement reflected their experience during the film, using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*): *Relatedness* (e.g., "It felt good to be captivated by the events around Selma and her son during the film."), *Activation of central values* (e.g., "Precisely because the film was so distressing I had the feeling that the film delivered central values of life in an authentic way."), *Competence/personal growth* (e.g., "I have a good feeling because the emotions that I felt during the film challenged me in a positive way."), *Purpose in life/self-acceptance* (e.g., "I feel good because now that I have seen this film I recognize my life as fulfilled and meaningful."), and *Autonomy* (e.g., "It is good to recognize that my life is not affected by adverse circumstances.").

To assess sadness and joy during the movie, six items of the Differential Emotion Scale (DES; Izard, Dougherty, Bloxom, & Kotch, 1974) were used (i.e., *sadness*,



*depressed, discouraged, joy, upbeat, and happy*). Participants responded using a 5-point Likert scale to indicate how well the item described their feelings during the film, from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very strong*). An exploratory factor analysis was conducted using the promax rotation ( $\kappa = 4$ ) to reduce the items into subscales. Two factors were extracted that explained 72.11% of the variance, with each item having high loadings on one factor ( $>.50$ ) and low loadings ( $<.30$ ) on the other factor. The first factor, labeled “joy,” included the items joy, upbeat, and happy; the second factor, labeled “sadness,” included the items sadness, discouraged, and depressed. To assess mixed-affective reactions, we employed Ersner-Hershfield et al.’s (2008) procedures (see also Oliver & Raney, 2011). That is, mixed-affect scores were computed for each participant in terms of the minimum of their joy and sadness scores (formula:  $\text{Min}[\text{joy}, \text{sadness}]$ ). Thus, if a person reported high levels of joy and sadness (e.g., 4), the mixed-affect score would also be high (i.e., 4). If a person reported low levels of sadness (e.g., 2) and high levels of joy (e.g., 4), the mixed-affect score would be 2. The range of the score is from one to five.

## Results

Correlations between dependent variables, means, and standard deviations are depicted in Table 1.

In two studies, Wirth et al. (2012) have confirmed the factor structure of the eudaimonic entertainment experience scale. Using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), they found eudaimonic entertainment to be a five-dimensional construct as deduced from theoretical considerations. Therefore, a CFA estimating a five-factor model using AMOS 20.0.0 was conducted. The analysis revealed an acceptable fit of  $\chi^2(135, N = 149) = 155.15$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 1.94$ ; RMSEA = .079; CFI = .950; SRMR = .064 (cf. Hu & Bentler, 1999; Schermelleh-Engel, Moosbrugger, & Müller, 2003).<sup>1</sup> All subscales had good reliabilities ( $\alpha = .78$  to  $.86$ ).

**Table 1** Descriptives of and Zero-Order Correlations Between Dependent Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Relatedness								
2. Activation of central values	.68**							
3. Competence/Personal growth	.69**	.56**						
4. Purpose in life/Self-acceptance	.41**	.49**	.58**					
5. Autonomy	.43**	.43**	.56**	.74**				
6. Joy	.11	.11	.25**	.21*	.17*			
7. Sadness	.05	.07	.06	.09	.03	-.15		
8. Mixed-affect	.02	.05	.19*	.22**	.14	.92**	-.02	
<i>M</i>	3.28	3.13	2.80	2.76	2.62	1.41	3.23	1.34
<i>SD</i>	0.97	1.08	1.09	1.05	1.13	0.67	0.98	0.56

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

### Treatment check

A treatment check was conducted to determine whether the experimental manipulation was successful by means of the following item: "How did you experience the end of the film?" Participants could answer on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*very negative*) to 5 (*very positive*) with  $M = 2.93$ ,  $SD = 1.62$ . A two-factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed a significant main effect of the experimental manipulation,  $F(1, 145) = 448.39$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .76$ . Participants in the sad end group experienced the end as significantly more negative ( $M = 1.54$ ,  $SD = 0.72$ ) than participants in the happy end group ( $M = 4.34$ ,  $SD = 0.87$ ). Age-group had no effect:  $F(1, 145) = .281$ , *ns*. Thus, for both older and younger participants, the manipulation of the film end was successful. The age group  $\times$  experimental condition interaction was not significant. Both older and younger participants experienced the sad end as much sadder than the happy end.

### Tests of hypotheses

To test the hypotheses, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted with age group and experimental manipulation (sad end vs. happy end) as the between-subjects factors. The analysis revealed a significant and large age effect, Wilks'  $\Lambda = 0.76$ ,  $F(5, 141) = 8.90$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .24$ . On all five dimensions of eudaimonic entertainment, older adults scored higher than younger adults. In terms of the film ending, there was also a significant main effect of film ending with generally higher values for the happy end, Wilks'  $\Lambda = 0.92$ ,  $F(5, 141) = 2.39$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .08$ . The film ending  $\times$  age group interaction, however, was not significant, Wilks'  $\Lambda = 0.96$ ,  $F(5, 141) = 1.18$ , *ns*. Thus, the general hypothesis on age differences in eudaimonic entertainment (H1) could be confirmed. To deal with possible gender effects, we controlled for gender in the analyses. Gender did not affect any of the dimensions of eudaimonic entertainment.

To further examine the effects of age and film ending on each dimension of eudaimonic entertainment, five ANOVAs were conducted with the two factors. Means and standard deviations within the two age groups are depicted in Table 2. Older adults experienced a higher level of *relatedness* than younger adults,  $F(1, 145) = 31.82$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .18$ . Neither the main effect of the experimental manipulation nor the interaction effect was significant. Therefore, H2 could be confirmed.

In terms of *activation of central values*, the analysis revealed a significant main effect of age,  $F(1, 145) = 22.06$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .12$ . Older adults experienced eudaimonic entertainment to a higher degree than younger adults. H3 could therefore be confirmed.

Confirming H4–H6, the same age effect was found concerning *competence/personal growth*,  $F(1, 145) = 5.86$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .04$ ; *purpose in life/self-acceptance*,  $F(1, 145) = 4.33$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .03$ ; and *autonomy*,  $F(1, 145) = 11.81$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .08$ .

To test H7, the mixed-affect scores were correlated with the five dimensions of eudaimonic entertainment for each of the two age groups. As depicted in Table 3, among older participants mixed-affect was correlated with all dimensions

**Table 2** Mean Eudaimonic Entertainment Experience as a Function of Age

Audience Response	Age Group	
	Younger Adults (18–28)	Older Adults (62–87)
Relatedness	2.92 <sub>a</sub> (.85)	3.74 <sub>b</sub> (.92)
Activation of central values	2.81 <sub>a</sub> (1.02)	3.54 <sub>b</sub> (1.03)
Competence/Personal growth	2.62 <sub>a</sub> (1.03)	3.03 <sub>b</sub> (1.12)
Purpose in life/Self-acceptance	2.46 <sub>a</sub> (.99)	2.82 <sub>b</sub> (1.26)
Autonomy	2.51 <sub>a</sub> (.94)	3.08 <sub>b</sub> (1.11)
Joy	1.48 <sub>a</sub> (.60)	1.31 <sub>a</sub> (.74)
Sadness	3.34 <sub>a</sub> (.81)	3.09 <sub>a</sub> (1.15)
Mixed-affect	1.44 <sub>a</sub> (.55)	1.22 <sub>b</sub> (.56)

*Note:* Numbers in parentheses are standard deviations. Within rows, means with no subscripts in common differ at  $p < .05$ .

**Table 3** Zero-Order Correlations Between Eudaimonic Entertainment Experiences and Affective Reactions by Age

	Age Group					
	Younger Adults (18–28)			Older Adults (62–87)		
	Sadness	Joy	Mixed-Affect	Sadness	Joy	Mixed-Affect
Relatedness	.16	.01	–.03	.07	.33**	.30*
Activation of central values	.17	–.05	–.09	.09	.38**	.38**
Competence/Personal growth	.08	.12	.10	.09	.42**	.41**
Purpose in life/Self-acceptance	.14	.06	.08	.09	.37**	.45**
Autonomy	.14	.04	.05	.00	.36**	.37**

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ .

of eudaimonic entertainment. Among younger adults, none of the correlations was significant. Therefore, H7 could be confirmed. We also correlated joy and sadness with eudaimonic entertainment experiences. Among younger participants, none of the eudaimonic entertainment dimensions were correlated with sadness or joy. Among older participants, joy was correlated with all dimensions of eudaimonic entertainment (see Table 3).

To test hypothesis H8 that stated that the ending of the film would have an effect among older but not among younger adults, the two age groups were compared at the two levels of the experimental factor (happy end vs. sad end). None of the interaction effects was significant.

Given the multidimensionality of eudaimonic entertainment experiences, we had to conduct 10 single analyses to test H2 to H6 and H8. One might argue that testing the hypotheses separately on each subdimension of eudaimonic entertainment might cause alpha-error inflation. Therefore, we constructed a structural

**Table 4** Influence of Age Group, Experimental Condition, and Interaction of Age and Experimental Manipulation on Eudaimonic Entertainment Dimensions

Dependent Variables	Relatedness	Activation of Central Values	Competence/Personal Growth	Purpose in Life/Self-Acceptance	Autonomy
Predictors	<i>b</i> (SE)	<i>b</i> (SE)	<i>b</i> (SE)	<i>b</i> (SE)	<i>b</i> (SE)
Experimental Condition (0 = happy end)	-.237 (.165)	-.374 (.119)***	.132 (.173)	-.295 (.194)	.130 (.169)
Age (centered)	.025 (.005)***	.015 (.003)***	.011 (.005)*	.015 (.005)**	.019 (.005)***
Age × Experimental Condition	-.006 (.006)	-.007 (.004)	-.006 (.007)	-.014 (.007)	-.012 (.007)

Notes: Scores are unstandardized regression coefficients, standard errors in parentheses.

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

equation model with the five latent eudaimonia factors as endogenous variables and experimental manipulation, the centered age variable, and the age × experimental manipulation interaction as exogenous variables. The model had an acceptable fit of  $\chi^2(108, N = 149) = 184.937$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 1.71$ ; RMSEA = .069; CFI = .951; SRMR = .068. Structural paths are depicted in Table 4. As can be seen in Table 4, age had an effect on all dimensions of eudaimonic entertainment. However, there was a significant main effect of the experimental manipulation on activation of central values. That is, both older and younger participants had less activation of central values given a sad end. The interaction terms did not significantly influence the dimensions of eudaimonic entertainment.

## Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine age-related differences in entertainment experiences that are beyond mere pleasure. Based on both theories of adult emotional development and theories of eudaimonic well-being we predicted that older adults reported higher levels on all dimensions of eudaimonic entertainment after having watched a meaningful movie. Bartsch (2012) and Mares et al. (2008) could show that compared to younger adults, older adults are more interested in contemplative forms of entertainment that let onlookers contemplate life's meaning, but also provide emotional stability. Furthermore, with increasing age, contemplative dramas are more favorably evaluated. With this study, we could show that older adults experienced higher levels of eudaimonic entertainment on five different dimensions after having watched a meaningful film. The awareness that lifetime is limited—a key premise of SST (Carstensen et al., 1999)—seems to increase more complex, socially, and emotionally meaningful cinematic experiences and finally lead to a more favorable evaluation of one's competence and one's own life. The results of this study are therefore in favor of SST. That is, older adults do not seem to be

hedonistic optimizers as proposed by DIT, but eudaimonically oriented “meaning seekers.” However, strictly speaking, this conclusion may be one-sided as we did not consider hedonic entertainment (i.e., enjoyment) in this study. A first—although rather implicit—answer to the question about differences in hedonic experiences between age groups can be found in Table 1. No differences in both joy and sadness between the two age groups were found. This result is in line with previous research (Kunzmann & Grühn, 2005; Tsai, Levenson, & Carstensen, 2000). However, future research should also integrate measures of hedonic entertainment in order to more fully understand entertainment experiences among older and younger audiences.

Whether the film ended in a positive or in a negative way, however, had a general effect on eudaimonic entertainment. However, inspecting both the univariate results and the results of the structural equation model revealed that only one subdimension—activation of central values—was affected by the end of the film. For both age-groups activation of central values was higher given a happy ending. The fact that the protagonist stays alive seems to meet participants’ central values. Given the sad end, the protagonist refuses legal help and nevertheless both she and her son die at the end. It seems that this end did not meet participants’ central values.

In contrast to H8, age and the experimental manipulation did not interact in affecting eudaimonic entertainment. Only a main effect of age was found. It seems that the gratifying feeling of being connected with the character(s) of the movie does not depend on whether the film has a positive or negative ending. This result makes sense since the feeling of connectedness with a character that feels authentic and supportive is something that gradually develops in the course of the reception process and is therefore not focused on the end of the film. The same explanation applies to *competence/personal growth* and *autonomy*. Whereas the former is a positively valenced feeling that arises when emotional or cognitive challenges caused by a film are successfully mastered during reception and the latter is a positive feeling when one is under the impression that he or she is in charge of one’s own life compared to the character of a somber movie. However, although the former dimension focuses on the viewing process and the latter on the onlooker’s life, both take the whole story into account and not just the end. In a nonmediated context the sense of relatedness and the sense of competence and autonomy have been shown to be particularly pronounced in older adults (Carstensen et al., 1999; Kasser & Ryan, 1999). It seems that this is also the case when the experiences are mediated.

Furthermore, it was also found that mixed-affect was related to all dimensions of eudaimonic entertainment, but only among older participants. In other words, for older viewers, more complex entertainment experiences go along with more complex emotional states. Interestingly, among older participants eudaimonic entertainment experiences were also highly correlated with joy. Thus, for older participants, eudaimonic entertainment experiences seem to be particularly positive. This finding could be interpreted as follows: The different dimensions of eudaimonic entertainment can also be regarded as some form of emotion regulation that taps different life domains that is more pronounced among older than among younger adults (Carstensen et al.,

1999). Gross (1999) describes emotion regulation as the attempts people make to modify their emotional responses. He discerns between two broad emotion regulation strategies: antecedent- and response-focused emotion regulation. The former is conceived as a manipulation of the input system (Gross, 1999). That is, one can select either the situation to be in or the attentional deployment he or she wants to pay to certain aspects of a situation. Antecedent-focused emotion regulation also entails the monitoring of one's emotional state. Alternatively, one might also reappraise the situation which he or she is in. This intensifies, diminishes, or prolongs the emotional response (Gross, 1999). The different subdimensions of eudaimonic entertainment could be some form of antecedent-focused emotion regulation because given a sad and mournful film the attention is directed to something else than the sad nature of the situations depicted (i.e., relatedness with the character, a general sense of autonomy compared with the character, a positive feeling of competence, or a general positive evaluation of one's life). Thus, eudaimonic entertainment experiences could be regarded as a form of reappraisal that finally leads to positive emotions and well-being (see also Fredrickson, 2001). Research has shown that antecedent-focused emotion regulation is more pronounced among older adults than among younger adults (Carstensen *et al.*, 2003), and this study has shown that this is also the case for subdimensions of eudaimonic entertainment experiences. However, future research should examine connections between age, emotion regulation strategies, and eudaimonic entertainment experiences.

The findings of this study might have broader implications beyond entertainment research. For example, from a functional life span development perspective (e.g., Martin, Jäncke, & Röcke, 2012), meaningful films could be used as a means to enable stabilization (i.e., a dynamic process that allows for flexibility with regard to environmental demands) because they might help (older) individuals to better accept their life or to develop a feeling of connectedness or competence and autonomy. A multidimensional measure of eudaimonic entertainment experiences such as we use in this work might help to understand the beneficial effects of meaningful movies and shed light on recreational or even therapeutic effects of entertainment media (cf. Reinecke *et al.*, 2012). Especially for persons with deficits in autonomy, competence, or relatedness, entertainment media can be a useful means of finding meaning. One can, for instance, better accept one's own life after having watched a certain film, enjoy a feeling of accomplishment to have mastered the challenge of a deeply moving story and the emotions associated with it, or realize that he or she can lead his or her life in a relatively autonomous manner (compared to the character of a movie). Accordingly, Wirth *et al.* (2012) mention not only the recreational but also the therapeutic effects of entertainment media exposure. Treating eudaimonic entertainment as a multidimensional concept can lead to a fine-grained understanding of beneficial media effects. Treating it as a broad concept would mask this differentiated picture of benefits. However, as these considerations are rather speculative, further research is needed (for instance, with clinical samples or persons with certain deficits)

that empirically examines therapeutic benefits of eudaimonically entertaining media offerings.

Finally, from a methodological perspective, this article shows the added value of not only considering undergraduate students in media effects research, but also taking into account other age groups.

### Limitations

Despite its promising results, this study also has its limitations. First, it is important to mention that, concerning its cross-sectional nature, this study confounds age and cohort effects. That is, this study does only argue in developmental and not in generational terms (Mares & Woodard, 2006; Mares et al., 2008). Another limitation may be found in the fact that the results of this study are based on a single film. As mentioned above, eudaimonic entertainment experiences are influenced by both properties of the stimulus and properties of the viewer. Given the story of the film, an alternative interpretation of the results is possible. The differences between the two age groups in relatedness, for instance, may be due to the fact that older participants could better relate to the main character's role of a parent. Thus, given a single movie, the results of this study are difficult to be transferred to meaningful movies in general. Future studies should, therefore, replicate the current findings with other films of different genres.

However, we believe that this study has further refined our understanding of more complex entertainment gratifications. Developmental differences seem to play an important role in eudaimonic entertainment experiences. When time is limited, the importance of emotionally meaningful goals, and the appreciation of the fragility and the value of human life increase. This general tendency of older adults toward the establishment of meaning, the maintenance of close social relationships, and a certain feeling of competence and autonomy also seems to be present in movie viewing situations. Thus, taking the older audience into account and just relying on undergraduate samples provides a more detailed picture of nonhedonic entertainment experiences.

### Acknowledgments

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### Note

- 1 Wirth et al. (2012) also reported a second-order factor model, although it did not substantially improve model fit. The same model was also examined with the present data. However, it did not reveal an acceptable model fit. One might argue, however, that eudaimonia is one single experience. Thus, all items should load on one single "eudaimonia"-factor. However, a CFA where all items loaded on a single eudaimonia-factor showed a poor model fit:  $\chi^2(180, N = 149) = 584.15$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 3.25$ ; RMSEA = .124; CFI = .688; SRMR = .120.

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## Appendix A: Etiquettes Used for Film Endings

### Happy End

Selma was not hung. Luke took compassion on Selma and Gene. He offered Selma to defend her for free so that Gene could undergo surgery. Selma paid Bill off in installments. In court, Luke could prove that the money belonged to Selma. He also convinced the jury that Selma killed Bill because he asked her to do so. Finally, Selma was found not guilty.

Gene underwent surgery which prevented him from going blind. Selma and Gene moved to Jeff. Later on, Jeff and Selma got married.

### Sad End

The next day, Selma was hung. Jeff, Kathy, and also Gene attended the hanging.

The court found that the money was Bill's and that it had to be given back. Linda was awarded compensation for pain and suffering. Gene went blind because there was no money left to pay his surgery. Jeff excluded Gene from his life because he reminded him of Selma. Kathy tried to take care of Gene but he did not allow anyone to get close to him anymore.

**Lebenslauf**  
Dr. des. Matthias Hofer

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**Persönliche Angaben**

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**Adresse geschäftlich**                      Universität Zürich  
Institut für Publizistikwissenschaft und Medienforschung  
Andreasstrasse 15  
CH-8050 Zürich  
Tel.: +41 44 635 2063  
email: m.hofer@ipmz.uzh.ch

**Adresse privat**                              Matthias Hofer  
Albisriederstrasse 19  
CH-8003 Zürich  
Tel.: +41 76 391 1222

**Geboren**                                      24.08.1980 in Solothurn

**Zivilstand**                                   ledig

**Forschungsinteressen**

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Rezeptions- und Wirkungsforschung, Unterhaltungsforschung, Emotionsforschung, Präsenzerleben, Sozialkapital und neue Medien, Altersunterschiede in der Mediennutzung und Medienwirkung

**Methodenkenntnisse**

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Experiment, Umfrageforschung, psychophysiologische Methoden (EDA, EMG), Strukturgleichungsmodelle, Mehrebenenmodelle

**Ausbildung und berufliche Tätigkeiten**

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2009-2013	<b>Doktoratsstudium</b> am Institut für Publizistikwissenschaft und Medienforschung der Universität Zürich <b>Doktorarbeit:</b> <i>Sinnhaftigkeit und Bedeutsamkeit. Wesen und Determinanten eudaimonischen Unterhaltungserlebens</i> betreut von Prof. Dr. Werner Wirth (Universität Zürich) und Prof. Dr. Andreas Fahr (Universität Fribourg) <b>Abschluss:</b> Oktober 2013 <b>Note:</b> summa cum laude
2002-2008	<b>Studium:</b> Publizistikwissenschaften, Computerlinguistik und germanistische Linguistik
2002-2008	<b>Lizentiat</b> in Publizistikwissenschaft, Computerlinguistik und germanistischer Linguistik

**Lizentiatsarbeit:** Hofer, M. (2008). *Bewegte Bilder bewegen. Emotionen, Metaemotionen, Empathie und Emotionsregulation im Rezeptionsverlauf eines emotionalen Spielfilms.*  
**Note:** 6.0

Seit 2008	<b>Assistenzstelle</b> am Institut für Publizistikwissenschaft und Medienforschung der Universität Zürich, Abteilung „Media Psychology & Effects“ (Prof. Dr. Werner Wirth)
2007-2008	<b>Projektmitarbeit</b> bei Prof. Dr. Werner Wirth (Institut für Publizistikwissenschaft und Medienforschung der Universität Zürich): Tätigkeiten: Aufbau psychophysiologisches Labor
2007-2008	<b>Marktforschung</b> bei der TAMEDIA AG. <b>Tätigkeiten:</b> Datenauswertung und -aufbereitung
2006-2007	<b>Tutoratsstelle und Projektmitarbeit</b> bei PD Dr. Werner Meier (Institut für Publizistikwissenschaft und Medienforschung der Universität Zürich). <b>Tätigkeit:</b> Studentenbetreuung und Projektplanung
2005-2006	<b>Tutoratsstelle</b> bei Dr. Manfred Klenner (Institut für Informatik der Universität Zürich). <b>Tätigkeit:</b> Grammatikprogrammierung
2004-2008	<b>Marktforschung</b> bei der JEKO AG. <b>Tätigkeit:</b> Feldforschung
2005-2007	<b>Praktikum und Mitarbeit</b> beim Radiosender KanalK (AG)
02-03 /2003	<b>Aushilfslehrer</b> am Progymnasium in Grenchen (SO) für Deutsch und Latein
2002-2007	<b>Nachhilfelehrer</b> für Deutsch und Latein im Lernforum Ambassador in Solothurn
1992-2001	<b>Maturitätsabschluss</b> (Typus A)

#### **Zusätzliche Fertigkeiten/Ausbildungen**

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<b>Sprachen</b>	Deutsch: Muttersprache Englisch: sehr gut Französisch: gut Lateinisch: grosses Latinum Griechisch: Graecum
<b>Software</b>	SPSS MPLUS STATA
<b>2012</b>	Essex Summer School (Structural Equation Modeling with MPLUS)

**Mitgliedschaften/Awards/Ämter/Sonstiges**

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- **International Communication Association (ICA)**
  - o Divisions: Mass Communication, Information Systems
- **Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Kommunikations- und Medienwissenschaft (SGKM)**
  - o Fachgruppen: Publikums-, Rezipienten- und Wirkungsforschung, Methoden
- **Deutsche Gesellschaft für Publizistik- und Kommunikationswissenschaft (DGPuK)**
  - o Fachgruppen: Rezeptions- und Wirkungsforschung, Methoden

**Awards**

- **Dissertationspreis der SGKM 2013**
- **Best Paper-Award (Faculty Paper) ICA 11 in Boston, MA:**  
 Kühne, R., Hofer, M., Wirth, W. & Schramm, H. (2011, May). Structural Equation Modeling Spatial Presence. The Influence of Cognitive Processes and Traits on Spatial Presence. *Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the International Communication Association (ICA), May 26-30 2011, Boston.*

**Ämter**

- Seit 2013: **Fachgruppensprecher** der Fachgruppe Publikums-, Rezeptions-, und Wirkungsforschung der SGKM
- **2010 Gründung der Arbeitsgruppe „Beobachtung“** mit Prof. Dr. Andreas Fahr  
 Organisation und Durchführung von Workshops mit der Arbeitsgruppe „Beobachtung“
  - Zürich, 2011: Eye Tracking in der Kommunikationswissenschaft
  - München, 2012: Skin Conductance in der Kommunikationswissenschaft

**Reviewertätigkeiten**

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- Journal of Media Psychology (früher: Zeitschrift für Medienpsychologie)
- Communication Methods and Measures
- Poetics: Journal of Empirical Research on Culture, the Media and the Arts
- International Communication Association

**Medienauftritte**

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- Züricher Unterländer
- 20 Minuten
- Die Zeit Wissen
- Radio 105
- Schweizer Fernsehen „Einstein“ vom 23.02.2012
- Zeit.de

### Fachzeitschriftenartikel (peer-reviewed)

- Hofer, M., Alemand, M., & Martin, M. (2014). Age Differences in Nonhedonic Entertainment Experiences. *Journal of Communication*, n/a. doi:10.1111/jcom.12074
- Hofer, M., & Aubert, V. (2013). Perceived bridging and bonding social capital on Twitter: Differentiating between followers and followees. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 29(6), 2134–2142. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2013.04.038
- Hofer, M. (2013). Appreciation and Enjoyment of Meaningful Entertainment. *Journal of Media Psychology*, 25(3), 109–117. doi:10.1027/1864-1105/a000089
- Hofer, M., Wirth, W., Kuehne, R., Schramm, H., & Sacau, A. (2012). Structural Equation Modeling of Spatial Presence: The Influence of Cognitive Processes and Traits. *Media Psychology*, 15(4), 373–395. doi:10.1080/15213269.2012.723118
- Wirth, W., Hofer, M., & Schramm, H. (2012). Beyond Pleasure: Exploring the Eudaimonic Entertainment Experience. *Human Communication Research*, 38, 406–428. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2958.2012.01434.x
- Hofer, M., & Wirth, W. (2012). It's Right to Be Sad: The Role of Meta-Appraisals in the Sad Film Paradoxon A Multiple Mediator Model. *Journal of Media Psychology* 24. 43-54. doi:10.1027/1864-1105/a000061
- Schramm, H., Wirth, W. & Hofer, M. (2012). Genese und Modifikation von Emotionen bei der Rezeption von Musik. Eine appraisaltheoretische Modellierung. *Musikpsychologie*, 22, 123-142.
- Wirth, W., Hofer, M., & Schramm, H. (2012) The Role of Emotional Involvement and Trait Absorption in the Formation of Spatial Presence. *Media Psychology*, 15, 19-43. doi:10.1080/15213269.2011.648536
- Hofer, M. (2011). Mitfühlende Rezeption: Der Einfluss von Empathiefähigkeit auf Emotionen und Empathie bei der Rezeption eines traurigen Zeichentrickfilms. *M & K*, 59(3), 324-344.
- Wirth, W & Hofer, M. (2008). Präsenzerleben. Eine medienpsychologische Modellierung. *Montage AV*, 17(2), 159–176.

### Buchkapitel

- Fahr, A., & Hofer, M. (2013). Psychophysiologische Messmethoden. In W. Möhring & D. Schlütz (Eds.), *Handbuch standardisierte Erhebungsmethoden in der Kommunikationswissenschaft* (pp. 347–365). [S.l.]: Vs Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- Hofer, M., & Sommer, K. (2013). Seeing the others ... Der Einfluss von Kommentaren zu redaktionellen Inhalten auf den Third-Person-Effekt. In O. Jandura & A. Fahr (Hrsg.), *Theorieanpassungen in der digitalen Medienwelt*. (S. 159-174) Baden-Baden: Nomos.
- Hofer, M. (2013). Präsenzerleben und Transportation. In W. Schweiger & A. Fahr (Hrsg.), *Handbuch Medienwirkungsforschung*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- Hofer, M. (2012). Zur Wirkung der Nutzung von Online-Medien auf das Sozialkapital. In L. Reinecke (Ed.), *Unterhaltungsforschung: Vol. 7. Unterhaltung in neuen Medien. Perspektiven zur*

Hofer, M. & Wirth, W. (2011). Supplanting oder Supplementing? Der Einfluss von Chat-Kommunikation und das Sozialkapital der Nutzer. In M. Hartmann & J. Wimmer (Hg.), *Digital Technologies revisited* (S. 112–137). Opladen: Leske + Budrich.

Schramm, H., & Hofer, M. (2008). Musikbasierte Radioformate. In H. Schramm (Ed.), *Musik im Radio. Rahmenbedingungen, Konzeption, Gestaltung* (S. 113–134). Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften / GWV Fachverlage GmbH Wiesbaden.

## Vorträge

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### Eingeladene Vorträge

Hofer, M. (2013, November). *Meaningfulness. Nature and Determinants of Eudaimonic Entertainment Experiences*. Vortrag im Rahmen des Forschungskolloquiums am Lehrstuhl Peter Vorderer der Universität Mannheim, 05.11.2013, Mannheim.

### Tagungsbeiträge

Hofer, M. (2014, May). *Influence of Different Movie Genres on the Perceptual and Behavioral Component of the Third-Person Effect: The Moderating Role of Hedonic Motivation*. Paper accepted to be presented at the Annual Conference of the International Communication Association (ICA), June 22–26 2014, Seattle, WA.

Hofer, M. (2014, January). „Sowas unterhält mich doch nicht!“ *Ein Experiment zum Einfluss verschiedener Filmgenres und genereller Rezeptionsmotive auf den Third-Person-Effekt*. Paper accepted to be presented at the 21th annual meeting of the Media Reception and Effects Division of the German Communication Association, Hannover, Germany.

Hofer, M., Sele, M. & Wirth, W. (2013, September). Effects of Stereoscopic View on Spatial Presence: The Mediating Role of Mental Models. *Paper presented at the 8th Conference of the Media Psychology Division of the German Psychological Society*, September 4th–6th 2013, Würzburg.

Hofer, M., & Aubert, V. (2013, June). Bonding and Bridging Social Capital on Twitter: Differentiating Between Followers and Followees. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the International Communication Association (ICA), June 17–21 2013, London.

Hofer, M., & Wirth, W. (2013, June). The Role of Age in Eudaimonic Entertainment Experiences. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the International Communication Association (ICA), June 17–21 2013, London.

Hofer, M. (2013, April). *Are you entertained? Eine mehrdimensionale Messung des Unterhaltungserlebens in Rezeptionssituationen [Are you entertained? A Multi-Dimensional Measure of Enjoyment]*. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Swiss Communication Association, April 04–12–2013, Winterthur, Switzerland.

Hofer, M. & Ryffel, F. (2012, June). *Methodenkombination: Probleme und Möglichkeiten der gleichzeitigen Erfassung von Blickverlaufs- und Hautleitfähigkeitsdaten. [Combination of Methods: Problems and Possibilities of simultaneous Measures of Eye-Tracking and Skin Conductance Data.]* Presentation at the second Workshop of the "AG Beobachtung", 06.29.2012, Munich.



- Hofer, M., & Wirth, W. (2012, May). *It's Right to Be Sad: The Role of Meta-Appraisals in the Sad Film Paradoxon A Multiple Mediator Model*. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the International Communication Association (ICA), May 24-28 2012, Phoenix.
- Hofer, M. (2012, April). Der Einfluss Situationaler Referenzen und genereller Rezeptionsmotivationen auf das Rezeptionserleben bei einem emotionalen Spielfilm. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Swiss Communication Association, April 20-21 2012, Neuchâtel, Switzerland.
- Ryffel, F. & Hofer, M. (2012, April). Der Einfluss Situationaler Referenzen und genereller Rezeptionsmotivationen auf das Rezeptionserleben bei einem emotionalen Spielfilm. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Swiss Communication Association, April 20-21 2012, Neuchâtel, Switzerland.
- Hofer, M & Sommer, K. (2011, January). «Seeing the Others» Der Effekt von Kommentaren zu redaktionellen Online-Angeboten auf den Third Person Effekt [The Effect of Comments on Third Person Perception.] Presentation at the 19th annual meeting of the Media Reception and Effects Division of the German Communication Association, January 27.-29, Munich.
- Kühne, R., Hofer, M., Wirth, W. & Schramm, H. (2011, May). Structural Equation Modeling Spatial Presence. The Influence of Cognitive Processes and Traits on Spatial Presence. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the International Communication Association (ICA), May 26-30 2011, Boston.
- Hofer, M. & Sommer, K. (2011, Januar). «Seeing the Others» Der Effekt von Kommentaren zu redaktionellen Online-Angeboten auf den Third Person Effekt. Vortrag an der 19. Tagung der Fachgruppe Rezeptions- und Wirkungsforschung in der DGPK 27.-29.01.2013, München
- Schramm, H., Wirth, W., Hofer, M. (2010, Juni). Entertainment as Eudaimonic Well-Being. Vortrag an der Jahreskonferenz der International Communication Association (ICA), 22-26.06.2010, Singapore
- Wirth, W., Hofer, M. & Schramm, H. (2010, Juni). The Role of Emotional Involvement and Absorption in the Formation of Spatial Presence Vortrag an der Jahreskonferenz der International Communication Association (ICA), 22-26.06.2010, Singapore
- Hofer, M. (2010, März). *When and How Matters. Eine Studie zum Rezeptionsverlauf eines emotionalen Spielfilms*. Vortrag auf der Jahrestagung der Schweizerischen Gesellschaft für Kommunikations- und Medienwissenschaft (SGKM), 26.-27.03.2010, Luzern, Schweiz.
- Hofer, M. & Wirth, W. (2009, November). *Supplanting or Supplementing? Chat Communication and Social Capital*. Vortrag auf der DGPK/ECREA Conference "Digital Media Technologies Revisited", 20.-21.11.2009, Berlin, Deutschland.
- Hofer, M. (2009, März). *Nur ein Trickfilm? Der Einfluss von Empathiefähigkeit auf das emotionale und empathische Erleben bei der Rezeption eines Zeichentrickfilms*. Vortrag auf der Jahrestagung der SGKM, 26.-27.3.2009, Zürich, Schweiz.

### **Lehrtätigkeit**

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- HS13  
Forschungsseminar (BA): Aktuelle Entwicklungen der Unterhaltungsforschung
- HS13  
Vorlesung (BA): Schwerpunktvorlesung (SP3) – Nutzung, Rezeption und Wirkung
- FS13  
Seminar (BA): Unterhaltungsmedien und der Third-Person Effekt
- HS12

	Vorlesung (BA): Unterhaltung durch Medien
FS12	Seminar (BA): Nutzung und Wirkung verschiedener Unterhaltungsangebote und der Third-Person Effekt
HS12	Vorlesung (BA): Unterhaltung durch Medien
FS12	Seminar (BA): Are You Entertained? An Overview of Entertainment Theories
HS11	Vorlesung (BA): Unterhaltung durch Medien
	Seminar (MA): Forschung zum "Anfassen": Praxis der Labor- und Umfrageforschung
FS11	Vorlesung (MA): Wissenschaftstheorie und Forschungslogik
HS10	Vorlesung (MA): Forschung zum "Anfassen": Praxis der Labor- und Umfrageforschung
	Vorlesung (MA): Multivariate Statistik
	Vorlesung (BA): Unterhaltung durch Medien
FS10	Vorlesung (BA/MA): Musik und Medien
	Vorlesung (MA): Wissenschaftstheorie / Forschungslogik
HS09	Vorlesung (MA): Multivariate Statistik
	Vorlesung (MA): Forschung zum "Anfassen": Praxis der Labor- und Umfrageforschung
FS09	Seminar (BA): Emotionen trotz negativen Emotionen
HS08	Seminar (BA): Emotionen trotz negativen Emotionen
	Vorlesung (BA): Statistik & Datenanalyse
	Vorlesung (MA): Forschung zum "Anfassen": Praxis der Labor- und Umfrageforschung

### **Betreute Abschlussarbeiten**

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Aeschbach Martin (2010). *Ablenkungsgefahr Untertitel? Ein Eye Tracking Experiment zur Wahrnehmung von Product Placements im Spielfilm bezüglich des Einflusses von Untertiteln und den Charakteristika eines Product Placements*. Lizentiatsarbeit am Institut für Publizistikwissenschaft und Medienforschung der Universität Zürich.

Anastassova-Gubler, Gergana (2010). *Das Wesentliche ist für die Augen unsichtbar – Ein Eye Tracking-Experiment zum Mere Exposure-Effekt bei Bannerwerbung im Internet*. Lizentiatsarbeit am Institut für Publizistikwissenschaft und Medienforschung der Universität Zürich.

Chaimowitz, Daphne (2011). *Kann das Lesen des Gratismagazins 20 Minuten Friday geplant werden? Eine Onlinebefragung untersucht das Leseverhalten anhand der Theory of Planned Behavior und der beiden Persönlichkeitsmerkmale Sensation Seeking und Need for Entertainment*. Lizentiatsarbeit am Institut für Publizistikwissenschaft und Medienforschung der Universität Zürich.

Aubert, Viviane (2011). *Sozialkapital in Online-Netzwerken. Der Nutzen von „Followern“ und „Followees“ auf Twitter*. Lizentiatsarbeit am Institut für Publizistikwissenschaft und Medienforschung der Universität Zürich.

Hutzli, Tina (2010). *Erinnerte Emotionen. Ein Experiment zur emotionsgenerierenden, aktivierenden und reaktivierenden Kraft der visuellen und auditiven Komponenten im Film Sennentuntschi*.

Masterarbeit am Institut für Publizistikwissenschaft und Medienforschung der Universität Zürich.

Laine, Nicole (2010). *Skillfully Sad: The Role of Emotional Skills, Micro Emotions, and Emotion Regulation Strategies on Eudaimonic and Hedonic Entertainment During and After a Sad Movie*. Lizentiatsarbeit am Institut für Publizistikwissenschaft und Medienforschung der Universität Zürich.

Brandao, Patricia (2013). *Fürchtest du dich schon? Eine experimentelle Studie zum emotionalen Erleben der Angst in Horror-Spielen*. Lizentiatsarbeit am Institut für Publizistikwissenschaft und Medienforschung der Universität Zürich.

Roth-Kahrom, Leyla (2011). *Schön traurig – traurig schön? Valenztransformation bei Tragödien: Ein Experiment vor des EMR-Modells unter Berücksichtigung von Situationalen Referenzen und Rezeptionsmotivationen*. Masterarbeit am Institut für Publizistikwissenschaft und Medienforschung der Universität Zürich.

Sele, Marc (2012). *The Role of the Stereoscopic 3-D Film Format in Spatial Presence and Media Enjoyment*. Masterarbeit am Institut für Publizistikwissenschaft und Medienforschung der Universität Zürich.